

DRAMATIC AND PROSE
MISCELLANIES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
J. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD-STREET-HILL.

DRAMATIC
AND
PROSE MISCELLANIES.

BY
ANDREW BECKET,
AUTHOR OF "SHAKSPEARE'S HIMSELF AGAIN," ETC.

EDITED
BY WILLIAM BEATTIE, M.D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

LONDON:
GEORGE VIRTUE, 26, IVY LANE.
1838.

TO
HIS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY
ERNEST AUGUSTUS
KING OF HANOVER

ETC. ETC. ETC.

These Volumes

ARE BY PERMISSION
MOST HUMBL Y AND MOST RESPECTFULL Y

DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

	Page
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR	ix
AFFECTATION; a Comedy, in Five Acts	1
LAVINIA; a Tragedy, in Three Acts	143
THE GENII; a Masque (Second Edition)	183
SOCRATES; a Dramatic Poem (Third Edition).	219
THEODOSIUS to CONSTANTIA; a Poetical Epistle (Second Edition) .	281

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF

THE AUTHOR.

IN presenting to the public this new edition of the *Miscellaneous Works of ANDREW BECKET*, it may be reasonably supposed that *some of his readers will be* desirous to become acquainted with a few particulars of his life, his early occupations and studies, and those literary productions in which he successively engaged. The Editor, at the same time, begs to observe, that the Biographical Notice here prefixed, is not to be considered as a succinct narrative, but only as embodying a few prominent features in the author's life, such as bear more particularly on the subject of his prose, and dramatic works.

Mr. Becket's family is of Irish extraction, the elder branch of which was once in possession of landed estates in the county of Galway. The subject of this memoir is the only son of the late Thomas Becket, of Pall Mall, who was brought up to the business in London, and began his career as a bookseller in the Strand, where our author was born on the 11th of September, 1749. For the better cultivation of his mental powers, which began to

develop* themselves at an early period of youth, his father placed him under the personal care of Dr. Rose, then master of an eminent school at Chiswick, where he made such progress in the rudiments of classic literature, as fully realize the promise held out from the first dawn of his talents.

After this initiatory process, which continued several years, young Becket was taken home, and sent to complete his education under the Rev. Dr. Pollock, at his academy in Great Windmill-street, once the house of the celebrated William Hunter, and where the meetings of the Westminster Medical Society are now held. Here he evinced the same assiduity and quickness of intellect, and the same amiable disposition, which won the favourable opinion of all his masters, and the lasting regard of his juvenile companions. In French—a language but little cultivated at that period—he made such progress as to be able, not only to converse in it with fluency, but to compose various sonnets and epigrams, both graceful and pointed, and evincing an intimate knowledge of the genius of the language.

And here it may be mentioned, that when only in his fourteenth year, he wrote a comedy, founded on the “*Emile*” of Rousseau, of which his father’s partner, De Hondt, thought so favourably as to have it trans-

* Between the ages of 10 and 12, he composed two fables, entitled “*The Bee and the Butterfly*,” and “*The Poet*,” which afford abundant evidence of the facility with which, even at that stage of the infant mind, his ideas flowed in numbers which would have done no discredit to a much older head. These two fables were neatly printed by “*Andrew Strahan with his own hand*,” (as the inscription commemorates,) who became afterwards printer to the king, and died at an advanced age.

lated and published in Dutch. The father, however, having destined his son to serve the public, not as an author, but as a bookseller and publisher, did not encourage the literary taste which had thus early discovered itself. But, as his house and table were frequented by many of the best authors of that brilliant period, the power of contagion was superadded to that of natural talent and propensity; and—thus living almost exclusively in the society of literary men, imbibing their sentiments, sharing their enthusiasm, and with them discoursing on congenial subjects—it will not be wondered at that the muses triumphed in secret over the force of paternal injunction, and that, while the day was spent by young Becket in the duties of the office, the night was often employed in more congenial lucubrations.

The time to which we now allude was about the close of that Augustan period, when Johnson, Garrick, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and other stars of that brilliant galaxy, were mutually reflecting lustre upon their country and upon each another. At their literary and social meetings, young Becket was a frequent spectator and listener—an attentive pupil in that school of unrivalled philosophy, the great object and tendency of which were to elevate and improve every faculty of the human mind and heart.

Though now on the verge of ninety, Mr. Becket still speaks with grateful enthusiasm of the opportunities he thus enjoyed, and of the manners and characteristic habits of those great men, with whom he felt it was the highest privilege to associate. Many anecdotes which have since found their way into the multifarious memoirs

of these colossal supporters of the national literature, originated in circumstances personally familiar to our author, and to which he frequently adverts in his retrospective sketches.

To the elder Becket, Garrick* was particularly partial, and procured for him the distinction of bookseller to the royal family. A portrait is now before me, which Garrick had taken of him by a talented French artist, as a *souvenir* of his esteemed friend the bookseller.

Under circumstances like these, the subject of the present memoir was brought into almost daily contact with Garrick, whom he often assisted as amanuensis, and thus laid the foundation of that esteem and confidence which on the part of Garrick, he ever afterwards

* At the risk of its being thought rather out of place, I cannot resist the opportunity here afforded of subjoining a characteristic extract or two, from one of Garrick's letters to Mr. Becket, in a case in which the latter appears to have been a sufferer to a large amount:—

"Dear Becket,—I am glad you have sent your packet to Sir Watkin, and hope Porter will lose no time to send it to Wynstay. . . . To be sure, G——n's behaviour to you, considering the original debt was C——n's, is as astonishing as it was most unjust, cruel, wicked, and unparalleled. It is impossible but he must be very unhappy in the end, for the more it gets wind, the more will he be condemned. . . . It is really so strange that I can yet scarce believe it. . . . Do you think that G——n will dare to go on? It is impossible that they will suffer such a story to be brought into a court of justice. . . . I have been very ill to-day, but am better now, and hope to walk stoutly to-morrow. . . . Old C——n has behaved just as I thought he would—with wicked partiality to N——n, and with cruelty and injustice to the other. He was a good-for-nothing ignorant——. I leave you to fill up the blank as you please. . . . How go the theatres on? Was Falstaff followed this evening,—or did Mrs. Barry bear the prize away in Zenobia? She has desired me to write an epitaph for Barry—I can't refuse her, and yet I don't like the office. . . .

"Yours ever,
"D. GARRICK."

"Hampton, Tuesday night."

enjoyed.* It is to this early intimacy with the great actor, that we may reasonably impute Mr. Becket's strong partiality for the legitimate drama. The many instances of personal kindness, and words of encouragement with which, at this period, Garrick fostered the literary ambition of his young protégé, the latter still gratefully remembers.

Though assiduously cultivating the muse in secret, young Becket became now, ostensibly at least, a junior partner in the trade; but his diligence was not such as to leave him unsuspected of greater partialities. When reminded of business, to which his father paid unremitting attention, our author consoled himself with the prospect which Garrick's encouragement had held out, of being able, in due time, to take a final leave of the "weighty affairs of the Strand," and to fix his abode in the more congenial, though less profitable, regions of Parnassus. But often, in weighing the various considerations for and against the "vaulting ambition" which led him captive, some misgivings would naturally arise, and he would exclaim, in imitation of Garrick—

"Ye gods, what crime hath my poor father done,
That ye should make a poet of his son!"

But as, to his ardent imagination, only a late and uncertain competence was held out by trade, and immediate fame, with a prospective wreath of immortality, by the

* As an additional testimony of the opinion which Garrick entertained of Young Becket's taste and judgment, it may be mentioned that he entrusted to his perusal many of the new plays, and in their adoption or rejection was generally influenced by Mr. Becket's opinion. In his private affairs, he appears to have reposed in him the same uniform confidence; and on one particular occasion, when he had to quit the capital for some time, he made Becket the depository of all his testamentary and other papers of value. But on this and similar facts, highly complimentary to our author, I am not now at liberty to enlarge.

pen, the Muse only strengthened her ascendancy by every renewed conflict that threatened to corrupt her votary ; till at length, establishing himself in a bachelor's lodgings in the Strand, young Becket resigned himself entirely to the service of literature.

We are not now to ask if such a decision, under all the circumstances of his case, was wisely come to ; but we feel assured that, independently of his own natural bent, Garrick's flattering encouragement alone might well be supposed capable of determining any similar aspirant as to the choice that was then offered for his acceptance.

In proof of the partiality entertained for him by his histrionic patron, he received through his interest the honorary appointment of sub-librarian at Carlton House, where he continued for many years to discharge the duties of his trust with great credit to himself, and much satisfaction to the Prince of Wales.

His pen, in the mean time, contributed many articles to the miscellaneous literature of the day, which brought him more constantly into notice. These were chiefly critiques, *jeux d'esprit*, epigrams, and many humorous and satirical pieces, which, by having immediate reference to some particular character, or passing event of the day, were read with corresponding zest, and acquired for their author the reputation of ready and caustic wit. But, as just observed, the subjects by which these sallies were called forth were of themselves only ephemeral, so that the interest they excited was transient, and not to be felt in its full force, unless when viewed in the connexion described.

The poem of "Theodosius and Constantia" was the first sustained effort of his muse, which gave Mr. Becket place and consideration among the poets of his time. It was printed in quarto, uniform with the first editions of Goldsmith's "Traveller" and "Deserted Village;" and the reception it met with from the public was sufficient to encourage the author to travel boldly upward in the steep ascent to fame.

In addition to the distinguished individuals already mentioned, as frequent guests at his father's, was Sir John M'Pherson,* who was a professed admirer and patron of literature, and paid Mr. Becket some high compliments on his talents.

Previously to his appointment as assistant librarian to Dr. Clark, at Carlton House, Mr. Becket obtained under the patronage of Fox and Sheridan, a situation, of small emolument, in the Secretary of State's office;† but which was lost at the change of administration, when Lord North succeeding, brought into office with him numerous followers, among whom was the celebrated Mr. Brummel, the *arbiter elegantiarum* of the day.

A favourable opportunity now offered of visiting the continent, of which Mr. Becket gladly availed himself, and being entrusted with a commission to Dr. Maclean, minister of the English Church at the Hague, embarked in a Dutch trader, and landing safely in Holland, made a tour of some duration in the United

* M'Pherson, the translator of Ossian, was another of his friends.

† In 1782, Mr. Becket obtained another situation of similar emolument in Somerset-House, from which, after forty years' service, he retired on a small pension in 1822.

Provinces. The result of this excursion was "A Trip to Holland," which was published soon after his return home, and besides passing quickly into a second edition, was noticed by the critics of the day, as "a work which Sterne himself would not be ashamed to own." In this work he has made some piquant remarks on the people and country of Holland, where, by social intercourse and observation, he completely subdued certain illiberal prejudices with which he had set out.*

He next, besides his contributions to the periodical literature of the day,† undertook to edit several of Sir Richard Sullivan's works;‡ these, when completed, were succeeded by a picturesque illustrated work on India, the literary portion of which was furnished by Mr. Becket, the drawings by Hodges, and it obtained considerable success at the time.—But to enumerate the various subjects in which Mr. Becket volunteered the services of his ever-active and enterprising mind, would far exceed the limits to which the Editor is restricted in this brief notice. He was, for nearly ten years, one of the principal writers in the *British and Monthly Reviews*; and, as a critic, was well known for the candour, taste, and discrimination, with which he exercised his pen in that dangerous and difficult art. His own account of his connexion with the proprietor of the "*Monthly Review*," and the miserable pittance which he received

* To the Prince of Orange and the then Stadtholder, he has done ample justice; and what was there said of the prince, may be now observed of the king of Holland.

† 1776 to 1786.

‡ This gentleman was afterwards appointed to a governorship in India, and, in proof of his regard, offered to take Mr. Becket out with him. This flattering invitation, however, our author was not at liberty to accept; and the governor quitted England without any further opportunity of serving him.

by way of remuneration, are too remarkable to be lost sight of in this place, and may be here annexed as an affecting instance of heartless oppression on one hand, and of magnanimous endurance on the other. Mr. Becket, it appears, had not taken the precaution to have a written agreement with the proprietor of that Review, but continued his labours for several years without the offer of, or request for, a settlement; the consequence of which was, a final misunderstanding between himself and the publisher.* In other quarters, however, his talents were

* The annexed is Mr. Becket's own account of his ill-requited labours, as written down at the time:—

“For two hundred and eighty articles in the Monthly Review (the number of volumes read for that purpose five hundred and ninety) and being the labour of between four and five years, I, A. Becket, am rewarded by R. Griffiths with the sum of forty-five pounds, no agreement being made. N.B. This is at the rate of about *three shillings* per article. Thus, for wading through Camden's *Britannia*, 5 vols. folio—for composing *six* pages for the Review, and extracting *seven* more; the whole being the labour of between two and three months—I receive *three shillings*. For reading the ‘Life of Frederick, King of Prussia,’ 2 vols. 8vo., of fourteen hundred pages, and for writing *eleven* pages, three shillings. For drawing up an account of the ‘Temporal Government of the Pope's Statc,’ twelve pages, three shillings: and so on; three shillings per article for criticisms to the number of *seventy*, and making from two to six pages each in the Review.

“If Mr. Griffiths should observe on this, that he has allowed me the same for the smaller articles as for the larger ones, I beg leave to reply, that three shillings per article in the ‘Monthly Review,’ is very wretched pay, even for those which may be called small, since I had two, three, and sometimes four and five volumes to peruse of every separate work; the entire number of volumes being *four hundred and sixty*; with *one hundred and thirty* to read for the larger articles; in all *five hundred and ninety* volumes. But if this be really hard upon a man whose income is *very* small, what shall be said with regard to the *seventy* other and larger articles? I have not words to express my feelings on the matter.

“A. BECKET.

“N.B. The clear profit arising to R. G., from the sale of the ‘Monthly Review,’ was *two thousand pounds* per annum.”

It may also be added, that all the articles contributed by Mr. Becket were acknowledged as *well calculated to support and extend the reputation of the Review in question.*

better appreciated, and many of his contributions acknowledged by a liberal remuneration.

During the whole course of his literary career, Mr. Becket appears to have kept up, by a regular system of reading, his early intimacy with the best authors of the continent, as well as the classic writers of his own country. Possessing a very retentive memory, he rarely lost sight of what he had read; but could quote, with remarkable facility, all or most of the striking passages which had occurred to him in the perusal of foreign and domestic literature; and hence the apt illustrations and allusions with which his style is so happily enriched.

With the exception of "The Genii" and "Lavinia," now first printed from the MSS., all the pieces of which the following volumes are composed, were printed separately many years ago, and have all passed successively into new editions.* It has not been thought necessary, in the present, to arrange the subjects in the same order in which they originally appeared; nor is it at all necessary for the due appreciation of these by the reader, that they should here be submitted to the test of editorial criticism. To certain objections which were made by former reviewers, the author has already replied with great ability; and as these objections were only started against the *measure*, and not the matter or the *moral*, employed by him in the dramas of "Socrates"

* "Affectation"—a Comedy, which was very highly commended in the former editions, and considered as eminently well adapted for representation on the stage—is printed from the second edition; "Socrates" from the second; "Lucianus" from the second; "A Trip to Holland" the same; and his truly philanthropic "Plan" from the second edition, a large impression of which was exhausted in a very short time.

and "The Genii,"* such objections will scarcely discourage any one who reads for improvement. The sentiments in these poems are often so striking and original, that the reflecting reader will hardly attend to the minor considerations of the poet's art, in the metrical neglect of which Mr. Becket adduces even Milton himself as an example. His object has been rather to affect the heart by the force of highly moral sentiments, than to fascinate the ear by the undulation of rich and elaborate *sounds*.

But it is no business of the Editor's to offer an apology for what the author himself has never viewed as an offence to the dramatic art. The thoughts, like gems in a very common setting, are often carelessly, but never, I think, obscurely expressed. The measure, though fully justified by the authority of the ancients, may occasionally appear harsh and deficient in rhythm; but this, it is hoped, will be found amply compensated by the fine moral and philanthropic spirit which pervades the text.

It has been our author's greatest ambition through life to render men wiser and happier by every topic on which he has employed his pen; and if by this he has neither amassed riches nor fame, he has the consolation to think that he has sacrificed neither principle nor character for their attainment. He has pursued a calm and undeviating tenor, exposing himself to many privations for the sake of others; sacrificing his private interests to the advancement of public good; and humbly devoting his best energies to the cause of humanity.†

* In both of these, the reader may remark many brilliant thoughts, though expressed with little attention to effect.

† As an instance we need only refer to his " *law; &c.*" and " *Dialogues.*"

In adverting to the close of Mr. Becket's public literary intercourse with the world, we pass over a long course of unremitting, though ill-requited labours, and severe disappointments, but which neither damped his courageous spirit, nor diminished his love of literature and his fellow-men. In retirement, he continued to prosecute his favourite studies, with unabating ardour; and, at length, after many years of studious investigation and unwearied research, produced his "SHAKSPEARE'S HIMSELF AGAIN;"* a work in which he has happily elucidated many obscure and disputed passages, and done more for the restoration of the original text than, perhaps, any of the numerous commentators who had preceded him. "If the dead," says Southey,† "could be supposed to take any interest in the integrity of their literary reputation, with what complacency might we not imagine our great poet to contemplate the labours of Mr. Becket." This work may be justly considered as the most arduous of all Mr. Becket's undertakings; and it has elicited from the most competent judges many testimonies highly gratifying to the annotator's genius and perseverance, and honourable to their own candour and liberality. It is a monument at once sacred to the memory of Shakspeare, and highly creditable to our author, who has done more than any other to exhibit the illustrious poet in all his original vigour and purity.

We are now briefly to touch upon that epoch in Mr. Becket's life which was to draw a veil between him and the face of external nature, by depriving him of the

* This work will be found more fully noticed at the end of Vol. II.
 † Quarterly Review.

inestimable blessing of sight. This privation was sudden, and for a time severely felt; for it cut him off, in a great measure, from society, and deprived him of the power of continuing those intellectual occupations, in which he had found so much delight. His mind, however, was too well stored with materials for pleasing reflection, and too well fortified by the maxims of sound philosophy, to be permanently cast down: it was only thrown back upon its own resources. His mental faculties were still vigorous, and when he could no longer direct his pen in the study, or enjoy his solitary walk abroad, he found compensation in the tranquil indulgence of that meditative state of mind — that abstraction from the outward concerns of life, which threw open a new world of enjoyment, in which those who have confined their thoughts to the grosser realities of life can neither participate nor sympathize. He could repeat Milton's beautiful episode on the loss of sight* without murmuring at the dispensation; he could talk of "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle;" thankful that he had read him in his youth; that he had employed his spring and summer in the acquisition of useful knowledge, and could now reflect with pleasure on its sunny landscapes; even when the darkness of life and old age had fallen heavy upon him.

"The snows of age
Fell, but they did not chill him: gaiety,
Even in life's closing, touched his teeming brain
With such wild visions as the setting sun
Raises in front of some hoar glacier,
Painting the bleak ice with a thousand hues."

Even now, when on the verge of ninety, he still quotes his favourite authors, and converses on literary topics

* Par. Lost. B. III. 73.

with great point and vivacity. To the past he reverts with those feelings of inward satisfaction, which only result from a consciousness of having done his duty; the present, with all its weight of years and bodily infirmity, he supports with cheerful serenity; and looks forward with humble confidence to a higher and happier state of existence beyond the grave.*

His habits of life, as far as I can learn, have been uniform and simple—observing an abstemious regimen as to diet, taking little exercise, and adopting, implicitly, few or none of those rules, obedience to which is often considered as indispensable to health and longevity. During the busy portion of his life, he appears, like the higher intellects of his day, to have derived great pleasure from social intercourse; to have been no strict observer of early hours; but to have mutually lengthened his days or his nights, just as leisure or business called for labour on one hand, or permitted indulgence on the other. He attributes the mature period of life at which he has arrived to the cause above mentioned—aided by an originally hale constitution; and adds in the words of his beloved Shakspeare—

“ For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors to my blood;
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility:
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly.”

Among the few sincere friends whom Mr. Becket has happily attached to him in his old age, he would deem it an act of ingratitude not to mention S. Toms and H. W. STATHAM, Esqrs., whose unremitting kindness and attention have done much to smoothe the asperities of

life, more particularly to relieve and support him under those hours of bodily pain and anxiety which are incident to every stage of existence, but doubly oppressive when that life has advanced to the extreme verge of mortality.* When, to the ordinary infirmities of the flesh, is superadded the loss of sight, with the consciousness that the sufferer is the last of his day and generation—standing, so to speak, like a solitary worshipper in that temple, which in the last century enshrined all that was remarkable in our land for the fire of genius, or the high attainments of philosophy—it is then that the kindness of friends is doubly felt and appreciated. The Editor will be readily excused for this public allusion to the gentlemen above-named, when he states that he has only done so at Mr. Becket's express desire, who is anxious that these pages should include his sentiments of personal regard and of grateful acknowledgment to both.

There is yet another topic to which Mr. Becket might feel still greater delicacy in adverting, did he not feel that

- * The family consisted of himself and three sisters, one of whom lately died. All were dependent on him, and to each he has acted with the kindness and liberality consistent with his humble means. His father lived to the age of 93, but, owing to immense losses in trade, died poor, yet with the testimony of a life of probity. Through a long series of years, he was a liberal and spirited publisher, and highly esteemed for his private virtue. A well-known author, writing to Garrick (Aug. 11, 1775) respecting a play which he was about to bring out, says, "Let Becket (as I believe him to be the only honest bookseller in the world) let Becket have the MS. and at his own price, for I am sure he'll give what it is worth." Mr. Becket was ruined by the extensive purchase of copyrights of British and continental works, which were afterwards pirated, as there did not then exist competent legal protection for him. He is buried in Westminster, with the following epitaph composed by his son:—

Stay, trembling old! stop, generous youth!

Lo, the rude tomb of Thomas Becket,

The friend of honour—virtue—truth:—

What need of heralds, then, to speak it?

delicacy in the present case must yield to a sense of duty, the performance of which—on this “his last appearance before the public”—he considers imperative. The circumstance is briefly this:—An illustrious personage, who, for thirty years, owed a considerable sum to Mr. Becket's father, for books and stationary furnished to his order, but which his straitened finances had prevented him from liquidating, was recently applied to through Mr. Toms, on behalf of Mr. Becket, stating the circumstances of his case, and praying that this long out-standing debt might be discharged. To this application a prompt and gracious answer was returned—the accounts were ordered for inspection, they were found correct, and payment made through the proper channel.

It is gratifying to Mr. Becket's feelings to embrace the first opportunity thus afforded him of recording this circumstance, and to add, that the justice so promptly, and so opportunely rendered him, was by the express command of his Majesty the King of Hanover.

It is subject of regret, on another hand, that, in consequence of a small composition which was offered and accepted some years ago by Mr. Becket, in a moment of pecuniary difficulty, there still remains in the hands of a former Patron, a few hundred pounds, which, if now paid, would not only insure additional comfort to his aged sisters during what may be truly considered the “twilight of life,” but would supply a little fresh oil for his own flickering lamp—smooth the rapid descent on which he has now entered, and secure, at the same time, a provision for some very humble but meritorious individuals, who have watched over him faithfully and

long. For this purpose application has been renewed in the proper quarter, and Mr. Becket indulges the sanguine expectation, that the generous consideration given to his case, in the instance above mentioned, will be followed, in the latter, by a similar act of justice, and that his acknowledged claims will be speedily met and discharged.

The circumstances here alluded to, cannot, indeed, be interesting to the public generally; but they will be acceptable to the few surviving friends, who, though widely scattered, still take a kindly interest in the health and worldly circumstances of our veteran author, and cherish the maxim of—"Thine own friend and thy father's friend forsake not." For them, in particular, these facts are stated; and the author humbly trusts that these volumes will be accepted by them as the last pledge of his affectionate regard. Of them and of the world he takes leave in the words which he has elsewhere put into the mouth of Socrates—

"Give them my thanks . . . and tell them all I ask
Is, as I peaceful lived, that peaceful I may die!
And further say—their zeal could naught avail,
Were the poor pleasures of this world yet wished for
By one fast journeying to the realms of bliss.—
Long have I lived in night, in utter darkness,
But now it changes, and eternal day
In full refulgent glory breaks upon me."—P. 279.

To these few scanty particulars of the life and writings of Andrew Becket, I have only to add that in the performance of my task as Editor, I have been guided by a sincere desire to do justice to the author and his works. I accepted this responsibility two years ago; and although, at the earnest desire of Mr. Becket,

much was conceded to me in the exercise of my new privilege, I have found it a task of some difficulty as well as delicacy*—of difficulty as to the selection of subjects; of delicacy as to the nature and character of these; and lastly, of diffidence as to the exercise of my own judgment and discrimination. I need only add, that in the use of my authority, I made choice of such of the author's works as had already received the meed of public approbation, and of such others as appeared to me, if not superior, at least not inferior to these.

To deprecate, in behalf of these Miscellanies, the severity of criticism, is, I trust, superfluous: one thing, however, I am bound to believe—namely, that had Mr. Becket enjoyed the faculty of revising this edition himself, there would have been less cause for anxiety as to its success, and less occasion to solicit the public suffrage in his behalf. As it is, I take leave of my task with this persuasion, that however little there may be found in these volumes to recommend them to a very extended circulation, there will be much to conciliate the favourable opinion of impartial readers, and something, at least, to establish a permanent reputation for the author.

W. B.

London, April, 1838.

* The author had previously decided that the publication should have been posthumous, which would have enabled his biographer—whoever that might have been—to have spoken more fully of his subject; but at length he abandoned this intention, and determined to erect his own literary monument in his lifetime.

AFFECTATION.

A COMEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THAT part of the following comedy in which Arabella is made to try the constancy of her lover, was suggested by a scene in the fourth act of the "Scornful Lady," by Fletcher. With respect to the other incidents of the present performance, as well as to the language throughout, it may be proper to observe that they are wholly unborrowed.

A few words more.—Mistake, or equivocate, is the great source of pleasantry in comedy; and as this, with liveliness of dialogue and a display of manners, has here been particularly attended to, it may not be impertinent to cite in regard to this matter, the opinions of that great dramatic authority, Voltaire, who is acknowledged, on all hands, to be an excellent judge of *stage effect*.

"I have remarked," says he, "that fits of laughter on the stage are scarcely ever raised but in consequence of some *mistake*,—for instance, Mercury taken for Sosia—the elder Wou'd-be for young Wou'd-be—Valerio talking to Harpagon of the beauties of his daughter Eliza, while Harpagon imagines that he is speaking of the beauties of his strong-box, &c. &c. Mistakes and errors of this sort, I say, always excite general laughter, and make

indeed, the principal feature in comedy. That there are other circumstances, and other incidents, which divert us in the representation, is true ; but, I repeat, it is only such situations as those above-mentioned, or which arise from mistake, that call forth the greater applause, or that create in an audience that particular pleasure which shows itself by the *heartly laugh*."

Thus speaks the Frenchman, and his sentiment may be exhibited as having its foundation in nature and truth.

Nothing is more common than to determine on the merits of a production by *comparison* ; yet nothing can be more absurd. And it is in this persuasion, that the distinguished poet already quoted, has said,—“ Il est juste de donner la préférence à Molière, sur les comiques de tous les tems, et de tous les pays.* Mais ne donnez point d'exclusion. Imitiez le sages Italiens, qui placent *Rafaëlle* au premier rang, mais qui admirent les *Paul Véronèse*, les *Caraches*, et les *Corrèges*, &c. En un mot, gardez-vous bien de vouloir rabaisser les pièces de théâtre, sous prétexte *que ce ne sont pas des comédies dans le goût de Molière* : évitez ce malheureux entêtement," &c. And another distinguished writer says,—“ Pour bien juger d'une production, il ne faut pas le rapporter à une autre production : c'est ainsi qu'un de nos premiers critiques se trompe." Now this, it should be observed, is the language of candour and taste ; for it is certain that a play, though different in every particular from that which is held up for a model, will yet, if executed

* This an Englishman may be permitted to question. But that Molière is of first-rate talent who will attempt to deny ? It is true, indeed, that his *colouring* has been thought too glaring. This, however, is a mistaken notion. In true comedy such colouring is absolutely necessary for effect.

well, be deserving of an equal degree of praise. "But," says the critic, "it is not the *sort of comedy* we have been accustomed to see." The answer to this will be,—So much the better—since the people have thus, from variety, *the greater amusement*; while the writer of the piece—always supposing it good *in its kind*,—will have, by consequence, *the greater merit*; that is, on the score of novelty and talent united.—"Elle produira sur le théâtre de la variété: et qui donne des plaisirs doit toujours être bien reçu."*

And the same judicious writer has further remarked,—"Eh, ne me parlez pas du *genre*: tous les genres sont bons hors le genre ennuyeux.—*Every kind is good, except the dull and the tedious.*"

Such are the sentiments of Voltaire on this subject. Be it at the same time remembered, that the province of the comic muse is not to awaken the more powerful passions, nor to excite what is called *interest* in the conduct of the plot. *Character*, with laughable *situations*, and humorous *language*,—"the reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm," as Dr. Johnson so well expresses it,—these, with occasional *sentiment*,† constitute the excellence of her art. In a word, the business of Thalia is to divert; and if in this she succeeds, it is all that we ought to expect of her, or indeed to admit; for should more be assumed, it were evidently an encroachment on her sister's rights. To "elevate and surprise," indeed, she should utterly disclaim. Murderers, or supposed murderers, with wonderful disclosures at the end of the piece, are foreign to

* Préface sur l'Enfant prodigue.

† "Interdum tamen et vocem comedia tollit."—Hor.

her department. Such kind of performances may be called comedy upon stilts, or rather, *comedy run mad*. At the same time it must be admitted, that a production, so conceived, may be deserving of praise. It is, however, a praise that belongs to the *novel*, and has nothing to do in the case of comedy. There are also compositions on the stage with the name of comedies, but which, in fact, are *satires*.—These, too, have certainly merit; yet it is still insisted, that such merit *is not of the kind to which it pretends*. But whoever is desirous of knowing what comedy really is, must have recourse to Molière.* It is a species of drama, in which *humour* is *all in all*;† plot or story is absolutely as nothing. Who, for instance, has less of perplexity in his plays: less of *intrigo*, as Mr. Bayes has ludicrously termed it, than the French author in question? *Fable*, indeed, is highly essential to tragedy, and even a *complex fable*. In comedy, on the contrary, so much of story alone is proper as may serve to draw out *character*,—*business* is actually a fault. “Yet this,” says an eminent critic, “is the taste of our comedy. Our writers are all for plot and intrigue; and never appear so well satisfied with themselves as when, to speak in their own phrase, they contrive to have a great deal of *business* on their hands. Indeed they have reason; for it hides their inability to colour *manners*, which is the proper, but much harder, province of true comedy.”

* “That wretched thing men call sheer wit avoid,—
Humour’s the main.”—*Bucks*.

† Let it not be supposed that the *humour* of Shakspeare, Jonson, and other of our earlier dramatists, is forgotten. The writer would here be understood as speaking of *equivoque* or mistake, and which was little known or little practised by them.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the present production, the wretched and hackneyed witticisms touching the *Bond-street lounge*r, will not be found, nor any temporary allusions whatever,—“allusions which”—to borrow the language of the admirable Harry Fielding—“*have rendered modern comedy as dull as a drawing-room.*” In fine, the pleasantry here exhibited is such as would have been pleasantry a century or two ago, and which will be the same a century or two hence. The *wonderful* and the *satirical*, as before observed, belong in no sort to the Queen of Smiles.

Thus much the Author has thought it necessary to instance, and, as it were, in apology for what he has done; while it may further, and in conclusion, be remarked,—that nothing is here effected by *narrative*: all is thrown into action: all is brought forward on the scene; and this, at least as he conceives, is essential to a dramatic work. But whatever pains may be taken in this or in any other species of composition, “a faultless monster” is what no one should expect to see,

The following remark of the great French dramatist, in regard to *true comedy*, is well deserving of attention:—

“Il est à peine nécessaire de vous avertir qu’il y a beaucoup de choses qui dependent de l’action. On sait bien que les comédies ne sont faites que pour être jouées, et je ne conseille de lire celle-ci qu’aux personnes qui ont des yeux pour découvrir dans la lecture *tout le jeu du théâtre.*”—*Molière’s Préf. to l’Amour Médecin.*

PROLOGUE.

LADIES and Gentlemen,—we humbly sue—
(Nay, Aristarchus, why that rigid brow ?)
We mean to deprecate your censure too,
That is, *in print*.—No season for it now,—
The player evermore will mind his cue,
And pay to *closet* critics reverence due.

Know you then—judges far less hard to please,
Or whence that dear good-humour in your faces ?—
Our poet is no Aristophanes,
No bright Menander of true Attic graces !
Plautus, nor Terence, with his polish'd ease :
Yet in *our* college hopes to take degrees. •

For, though not qualified to bear the prize
From Greek or Roman, in the school of wit,
He may with British bards of smaller size,
Through British candour, be allow'd to sit ;
While you his scenes, now gay now grave, agnize ;—
For it is written—*Merry be and wise*.

But hark ! some furious Dennis of the day
Exclaims—“ A Plagiarist ! I'll prove him such ;
The hint is stole from Fletcher's well-known play,
The Scornful Lady.” True : but that's not much.*
When not one line is taken, who shall say,
There's theft ? If any, we dare answer—Nay !

* Othello.*

PROLOGUE.

Still he rails on—"As man's by savage slain
In the fond hope his virtues to inherit,
So does the modern writer think to gain
By crushing others all their sense and spirit."
Our Author spurns the charge with high disdain;
Black Envy's effort, impotent and vain!

Yet one word more:—He strives by *equivogue*—
(So taught Thalia her lov'd son Molière—)
To raise that laugh which "gentle dulness' joke" *
In vain essays—though sure to make you stare. * * *
Let playwrights then an *erring* Muse invoke;—
"When do they not?" you cry.—The witty stroke!

But mark;—no pantomime to charm your eyes
Is brought in aid of the dramatic art:
He not, like Bayes, endeavours to "surprise," †
Yet fain would "elevate" †—we mean the heart.
From Nature only he has drawn supplies;
She, goddess! she—to her we sacrifice.

* "Gentle dulness ever loves a joke."—*Pope*.

† "Fellows that scorn to imitate Nature, but are given altogether to elevate and surprise."—*Rehearsal*.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BELVILLE, of a somewhat peevish, fretful temper; and whose inquietude is much increased, by the coquetry and affectation of his mistress Arabella.

BELMOUR, friend of Belville, but suspected by him of an attachment to Arabella; in love with Belinda.

LOVEMORE, whom Belville believes to be his true friend; but who secretly endeavours to supplant him with Arabella.

WORMWOOD, of a moody disposition: a pretender to virtue and honour, yet employing mean and contemptible arts to gain Belinda. Acting in concert with Lovemore.

WITLING, a pert coxcomb, who affects a passion for Arabella.

MODELY, a man of the Town; friend of Belville and Belmour.

SIR PETER POSITIVE, perverse and obstinate: at one time greatly uxorious, at another suspicious in the extreme.

OLD HARCOURT, a widower, encouraged by Sir P. Positive in his addresses to Melissa, to whom Sir Peter is Guardian.

YOUNG HARCOURT, his son, lately returned from India, whither he went, in infancy, with his uncle. On his arrival in England, he becomes enamoured of Melissa, ignorant, at first, of his father's pretensions to her.—But being afterwards made acquainted with the circumstance, as also of the pertinacity and selfishness of Old H., he determines on remaining unknown to him for a time, takes the name of Moreton, and aided by Lucy, endeavours to frighten him from the intended marriage.

DEMUR, a Lawyer.

WILLIAM, servant to Arabella.

ROBERT, servant to Lovemore.

LADY POSITIVE, a waning beauty; but who yet imagines that no man can behold her without losing his heart.

ARABELLA, niece of Sir P. P. really in love with Belville, but assuming an air of indifference towards him, in order to make trial (as she terms it) of his constancy.

BELINDA, sister to ARABELLA; in love with Belmour.

MELISSA, Sir Peter's ward; in love with Young Harcourt.

LUCY, a waiting-woman; artful and intriguing.

AFFECTATION;

OR, THE WAY TO LOSE HIM.

A COMEDY.

ACT I.

Enter BELMOUR, BELVILLE, and MODELY.

Belm. Welcome to England, my friends! you have had, I hope, an agreeable tour?

Mode. Superlatively agreeable, I assure you, Charles. Nothing edifies one like travelling. Why, Sir, the man who has not made the tour of Europe—

Belm. Must be, according to your idea of mankind, an idiot.

Mode. No, no, not absolutely that, neither. I would not be too severe upon you poor fellows, whom love or necessity obliges to stay at home. But, in my opinion, the man who has not travelled—(*admiring himself*)—

Belm. Can never be so complete a gentleman as Mr. Modely.

Mode. (*aside.*) Egad, he has it: it gives me an infinite deal of pleasure to find my merit is so conspicuous.—I would not be the trumpeter of my own importance, Charles; but the truth is, I am something different from the style of creature that I sported before my visit to Paris. Egad, I hardly know myself. Don't you perceive some alteration, eh, Charles?

Belm. Considerable, Sir: your coat is shorter by about half a yard, and——

Belv. 'Sdeath, here comes that fop Witling.

Enter WITLING.

Wit. Ha! Welcome, gentlemen, welcome, I rejoice to see you. You have made a plaguy long stay. We were all in despair, egad—quite in despair—thought you would never return. You are greatly improved though, wonderfully improved, Mr. Modely.

Mode. No! Do you think so, though? Why then I'll give you a plan of our route, Mr. Witling, which I would advise you immediately to pursue, as I know of no person who stands more in need of improvement than yourself.

Wit. You are satirical, Mr. Modely, very satirical—egad, you learnt it abroad, I suppose—Didn't you, Mr. Modely?

Mode. Certainly, Mr. Witling, certainly. There's nothing to be learnt *here*, you know.

Wit. True, Sir, true. This is a confounded bad place for improvement, that's certain. We can follow the fashions as well as any people, but we never set 'em.

Mode. O, never, never. We are dull, Sir—very dull: oppressed by the weight and heaviness of our atmosphere. Now the air of France is purity itself, and so very powerful, that egad it's not impossible but that a dozen years of its inspiration might refine even you.

Wit. You really think so?

Mode. Yes, Sir; for I was assured by a celebrated French philosopher, that he was acquainted with several Englishmen who had actually lost all tone and elasticity of fibre, but who, from residing for a certain space of time in France, were so totally altered that he could not discover any great degree of difference between his countrymen and them.

Wit. Ha! ha! ha! an admirable picture, Mr. Belville?

Belv. In my opinion 'tis rather a caricature, Sir. I pretend not to be an absolute judge of the merit of the two nations; but I cannot think that England would lose by a comparison.

Wit. Mr. Belville's sentiments, Mr. Modely, are such as might have been applauded a century ago; but I imagined that a travelled gentleman like him would have learnt to despise his own country, while he admired every other.

Mode. O, you are mistaken, Sir. The chief business of Mr. Belville's travelling has been in amassing curiosities.

Wit. Curiosities! Egad, if he had brought over a little *politesse* among his curiosities, it would not have been amiss. There's too much of John Bull in him, Mr. Modely.

Belv. (aside to Belmour.) 'Sdeath, this fool.

Belm. Peace, George, peace: no railing against fools. Come, come, do 'em justice: they certainly have their merit. Beside, their company is in some sort desirable.

Belv. Desirable!

Belm. Aye, desirable—for the insipidity of their jargon gives one an additional relish for the conversation of men of sense. So, hey for fools! I am their advocate.

Wit. (comes forward.) Well, but how did you pass your time in Paris?

Mode. Why, faith, as merrily as good wine and good company could make us.

Wit. Merrily! That's impossible, if Belville was of the party.—I never knew him merry in my life.

Mode. Come, come, there are times when he is not absolutely insupportable. Like his climate, indeed, he is frequently *sombre*, but he has his brilliant moments, I assure you.

Wit. Well, but who did you find there—any diverting characters?

Mode. O, innumerable! Few, indeed, whom I had the honour of knowing. There was, however, one d—— troublesome, chattering fellow whom we have met at — What the devil's his name!

Wit. O, I know who you mean. Jack Voluble, who is eternally talking without saying any thing.

Mode. The same, the same.

Belm. (to *Witling*.) Why thou art the most satirical rogue I ever met with.

Wit. Aye, aye, I can be severe enough upon occasion. But above all, I hate a sanctified face. 'Tis no more a sign of probity in a man than of chastity in a woman. I always suspect it. Why there's Wormwood now, Lovemore's friend,—a fellow, who, while he privately gives into all the vices of the times, is ever openly railing against them. Ha! my dear Wormwood, yours,

Enter WORMWOOD.

Belv. Prythee, Belmour, let us leave them awhile. Walk this way. [*Exeunt Belv. and Belm.*]

Wit. But why the devil dost always wear that melancholy phiz? Why thou look'st as sorrowful as a lover who had just received his final dismissal, or an author on the condemnation of his piece, or—

Worm. Truce with your satire, Mr. Witling. Or if you must employ it, let it be levelled against the vices and follies of this most wicked and ridiculous age.

Wit. Wicked and ridiculous! Prythee, how is it ridiculous?

Worm. How ridiculous? Why the men are grown effeminate, and the women—

Wit. Hold, hold, no treason against the fair. But how is it wicked?

Worm. Why, honour consists in duelling, and honesty in cunning; virtue in the concealment of vice, and religion in hypocrisy.

Wit. Well, but my dear Diogenes, why art thou out of thy tub? Such a cynic as thou art should surely abjure society.

Worm. I am here but as an observer, Sir.

Wit. O, what you mean to set about the reformation of manners, perhaps. 'Tis highly commendable, foregad; and, for one of thy talents, no very difficult undertaking.

Worm. No, Sir, no. 'Tis an Herculean task—I am no way equal to it.

Wit. I should rather imagine it a very easy task, for thou hast had experience enough in the ways of wickedness, I am sure.

Worm. Experience?—

Wit. Aye, experience. Why all thy friends know that thou hast been one of the wickedest dogs that ever existed: nay, many whisper that thou art so still, and that the cloak of virtue which thou now weardest, is merely put on that thou mayst sin the more securely.

Worm. An additional proof of the injustice of mankind, who are ever ready to depreciate the merit they are unable to attain.

Wit. Well said, Vanity! But what is become of the girl, Wormwood?—the Somersetshire girl, whom you were so kind as to release from the shackles of obedience, and brought with you to London?

Worm. (*aside*) 'Sdeath, does he know that too? Sir, the world—

Wit. Nay, nay, the world has done thee justice there—it swears thou hast an admirable taste.

Worm. Psha, psha! If you will give ear to these ridiculous stories—I acknowledge bringing the girl to London, indeed; but there was nothing criminal in the proceeding.—

Wit. Criminal! no, no, that's an ugly word—Charitable, charitable, call it—'twere pity that so much beauty should be buried in the country, you know. Well, after all, Wormwood, we men of pleasure, and the town, are infinitely obliged to you grave rogues for occasionally helping us to a new female acquaintance: for as honest Ranger observes, "there is a degree of assurance in you modest gentlemen, which we impudent fellows never can come up to."

Worm. Well, Sir, since you are thus bent against conviction, I shall not attempt to undeceive you. I am

not the only man, who, while his character is injured, is not permitted to justify himself.

Wit. Nay, nay, thy general character is a very good one; too good, i'faith. There are many much honest fellows who have not half so fair a name.

Worm. You would instance yourself, perhaps. I am not to learn that the epithet honest is too frequently ill-bestowed. Honesty, according to the modern acceptation of the word—

Wit. Well, well, I shall leave you to descant upon honesty, while I practise it, so adieu. Come along, Modely. *[Exeunt Wit. and Mod.]*

Enter LOVEMORE on the other side.

Worm. Lovemore! But why that dejected air?

Love. O Wormwood! I am the veriest wretch—Arabella, the lovely, charming Arabella, has refused to listen to me; but with an air and manner that has made me, if possible, more her admirer. Admirer! 'tis too cold an expression—I adore her.

Worm. She is indeed a fine woman, you must continue to adore her. The more fervent your adoration, the sooner you may expect success.

Love. Success! I almost despair of it; my only hope is in Belville's jealousy. Fortunately for me, his suspicions light on Belmour.

Worm. For that, my friend, you are indebted to me. I first awakened them. In doing it I have a double motive. Belinda must be mine. She has a fine fortune, I stand in need of it. I know her partiality for Belmour; but, I know, likewise, that she cannot brook disdain. Be it mine, by some forged contrivance, to keep alive their suspicions; yours to strengthen them. So may we assist each other.

Love. Admitting that you effect the ruin of Belmour, what hope have you of obtaining Belinda?

Worm. Why first, that from my general good character,

her uncle will be inclined to favour me. But here, here, my boy, is what may help us in our business (*showing a letter*). An intercepted letter from Belmour to Belinda; and as there is nothing in it but what may as well be applied to one woman as to another, my intention is to change the cover, and at a proper opportunity forward it to Arabella.

Love. Admirable! This may be productive of precious mischief.

Worm. I think so. But I must follow Witling. The fellow has been blurting out some unseasonable truths, which, should they get wind, will certainly ruin me.

Love. Then all is lost. Witling has the rancour of a disappointed prude; and whatever the stories are, will be unhappy till he has published them.

Worm. Never fear. Here's what shall bind him to secrecy (*pointing to his sword*). I think I know my man.
[*Exit Worm.*]

Enter CAPTAIN HARCOURT.

Love. Jack Harcourt! Is it possible? I am heartily rejoiced at meeting you. When I left Calcutta, I little imagined that you would so soon have followed me. How long have you been in England?

Har. Nearly six months. Yet you are the only person who must know of my arrival.

Love. Indeed! why so?

Har. I have two or three reasons for wishing to remain incog., but principally from the following circumstance: you must know that the young gentleman, my father, is desperately in love with Melissa Melville, my goddess, whom I accidentally saw at an assembly a day or two after my landing, and to whom Sir Peter Positive, who lives at yonder mansion, is guardian.

Love. I know he is—for that mansion likewise contains my goddess. What do you think of Arabella, Sir Peter's niece?

Har. A very fine girl and a fine fortune.

Love. True! I know but little, however, either of Sir Peter or his lady. Pray what sort of characters are they?

Har. Whimsical enough. My lady, who in her youth was a first-rate coquette, imagines that no man can possibly look on her without losing his heart: while Sir Peter, who is a good deal older than his wife, is ever jealous of her to excess. But I am not personally acquainted with either.

Love. Does Sir Peter encourage your father's addresses?

Har. Warmly. I begin to suspect that there are some secret and underhand dealings between them, in regard to Melissa's fortune.

Love. Indeed! That may be worth inquiring into.

Har. Certainly. But how have you succeeded with Sir Peter?

Love. Why, faith, my approaches must not be made directly to him. I fear he would not be much inclined to favour me.

Har. Take my advice then, and appear particular to his wife. Awaken his jealousy. It may forward your marriage with his niece.

Love. Egad, I'm obliged to you for the hint. My servant, Robert, is a keen fellow—he shall whisper something of the kind among Sir Peter's people, it may reach the ears of the knight, you know.

Har. True. Then will he be glad to get rid of you at any rate: and marrying you to his niece, he may think the surest way.

Love. It has a face, I confess. I'll about it instantly. But you will certainly be discovered.

Har. O, no fear of that. I quitted England with my uncle when a child: and as I have resided in India nearly twenty years, my features and complexion are so totally altered, that I cannot possibly be recognised by any one. I have taken the name of Moreton, and

introduced myself to my father as the particular friend of his son, who, as I give him to understand, was, on my leaving Calcutta, about twelve months since, in perfect health and spirits.

Love. Pleasant enough.

Har. Yes; and being able to give Mr. Harcourt a favourable account of Jack—of the Captain—I have gained his entire confidence. He has informed me of his amour, and even requested my advice on the matter: little suspecting that I am at once his rival and son.

Love. Ha, ha! Well, I sincerely wish you success. Pray, are you ever able to get a sight of Melissa?

Har. Very seldom. She scarcely ever makes her appearance at Sir Peter's, on account of some disagreement between herself and the nieces. She is now at the house of a female relation in the neighbourhood, where she is closely watched by order of her guardian.

Love. How then do you mean to proceed?

Har. Why, faith, I am somewhat puzzled about it. I must, however, endeavour to frighten my father from his intended marriage; for I have heard too much of his disposition to think of reasoning with him on the matter. Under such circumstances, a little artifice may, I hope, be pardonable.

Love. Certainly; and you have cunning enough for the business, I warrant—'Tis wit at a venture—Farewell! But not a word of my attachment to Arabella.

[*Exeunt severally.*

5

Enter BELVILLE, BELMOUR, and MODELV.

Belv. Thank heaven, we have got rid of our importunents. And now, my dear Belmour, inform me, I entreat you, how is my Arabella—have you heard of her lately?

Bel. Heard of her? Yes, and seen her too, almost every day during the last six months.

Belv. Seen her, say you? "almost every day during

the last six months!" Well, Sir, and is she happy—is she in health?

Bel. Hum—Tolerable; as well as a young lady can be, who has so long been deprived of her lover.

Belv. Truce with fooling! Was she uneasy; did she regret my absence, or call upon my name?

Bel. Your name? O yes, she sometimes mentioned it in her sleep.

Belv. In her sleep! 'Sdeath, Sir, what is it you mean?

Bel. So, you are forming a thousand ridiculous conjectures, I warrant. What an unhappy temper! perpetually fretting yourself, and suspecting your mistress. You went abroad in the same state of mind, and now when you are returned, and ought to ask her forgiveness for your doubts and suspicions, you are instantly relapsing into the same unmanly folly.

Belv. Mighty well, Sir. Yet do not misunderstand me; if you have any desire that I should consider you as my friend, let your attendance at Arabella's be less frequent.

Bel. A pretty reasonable request! But that it certainly will not, Belville, for I am attracted thither by a woman not a whit inferior to Arabella.

Belv. I understand you, Sir. You would, no doubt, insinuate that your visits at her house are made in favour of Belinda. The veil is too thin, Mr. Belmour, it is easily seen through. I can, however, boast of having one man whose virtue I have experienced. On Lovemore I may rely; yes, in him, thank heaven! I can confide.

[*Exit Belville.*]

Bel. And you will most certainly be deceived. What a perpetual self-tormentor!—But we had better follow, and endeavour to guard him against the machinations of his friend.

[*Exeunt Belmour and Modely.*]

SCENE II.

Enter ARABELLA and BELINDA.

Ara. And is Belville really arrived, Belinda?

Bel. He is; and will, no doubt, be shortly here.

Ara. You think so? Then we'll plague him delightfully.

Bel. Sister, sister, you'll certainly lose him if you trifle with his happiness so ungenerously.

Ara. Ungenerously! What, after leaving me on such a ridiculous pretence! so absurdly jealous of half the town—day after day soliciting new quarrels with me, after millions of forgivenesses on my part—Ungenerously! No, if I suffer his temper to gain an entire ascendancy over him, it will end in tyranny to me. I am determined to flirt with every man I know, merely to make him a little reasonable.

Bel. I am somewhat doubtful of the force of the remedy: but it's your business, and so—

Ara. But you forget, my dear Belinda, that he is yet in his noviciate. He must pass the customary time of probation, you know, before he can be permitted to take the vows.

Bel. Nature, I am persuaded, pleads powerfully for him in your breast. Let, then, her arguments decide the cause.

Ara. Pardon me, Belinda; my cause is of some importance. To trust to the pleadings of Nature alone, were unwise; I have, therefore, called in the assistance of Art.

Bel. I rather conceive that you are employing Art in opposition to Nature; and not, as you would insinuate, in her aid.

Ara. Well, well, you are counsel for Nature, and I am the advocate of Art. To which, you may ask, should we trust?—To neither, perhaps, separately; united,

however, their power may be great; but this is a matter which we must leave to be settled by time.

Enter SERVANT, BELMOUR, and WITLING.

Serv. Mr. Belmour, Madam.

Bel. Permit me, Madam, to introduce Mr. Witling to you—The pink of complaisance, and one of the first-rate wits of the age.

Ara. I am by no means ignorant of Mr. Witling's merit, Sir, and shall be proud of his acquaintance.

Wit. You do me infinite honour, Madam: the height of my ambition is to be numbered among your slaves; for as I never had the happiness of seeing you before, so I never till now saw perfect beauty.

Ara. Vastly flattering—Prodigiously obliging indeed. This, Mr. Witling, is, I suppose, the preliminary compliments; the first essay of elegant adulation.

Wit. O, by no means; plain prose is much too humble for introductory civility—No, Madam, that is yet to come. Here, indeed, is something more adequate to the occasion; allow me to present it—A small copy of verses, the pure inspiration of your beauty!

Ara. What, celebrate my charms before you had seen me, Mr. Witling?

Wit. O, Madam, report spoke loudly in your praise, and I have worshipped the echo. With your leave, I will repeat them. (*Reads affectedly.*)

“ O Arabella! loveliest of thy sex!
Form'd to torment us, puzzle, and perplex,
Accept this tribute; which,
Although not sung in lofty lays,
Yet, as it speaks thy beauty's praise,
The Bard esteems it—rich.

How d'ye like them, Madam?

Ara. O, extravagantly! Truly elegant, upon my word.

Bel. They are, indeed, Mr. Witling—Prior's ease with Waller's softness.

Wit. Madam! 'pon my soul, I beg your pardon: I have been strangely inattentive—

Bel. Inattentive! O, pray don't think of complimenting me; the verses are the most accommodating I ever heard. Though you addressed them to my sister, they'll do just as well for me, or any other lady.

Belm. Ha, ha, Witling, you are a lucky fellow: the ladies are contending for you already. Each, you see, has a desire to appropriate your verses to herself.

Wit. They are too good; too obliging, indeed. But our society shall panegyryze them as they deserve.

Ara. Your society—Pray what society, Mr. Witling?

Wit. O Lord, Ma'am, a little literary institution—Billy Madrigal, Dick Distich, Jack Epigram, Sir Phelim O'Satire, and myself. We have a weekly meeting, Madam, to propose subjects for the exercise of our genius. As critics, too, we carry terror with us. Sometimes, indeed, a writer will endeavour to shelter himself from our censures, by dedicating his performance to one of our members. This, it is true, has met with success: but if there be any particular merit in the piece, we who act in the double capacity of authors and critics, are under the necessity of crushing him. The reason is obvious—But mum for that. In a word, we are the admiration of those who do not write, and the dread of those who do.

Belm. Well, but when you really meet with excellence—

Wit. Excellence! 'Gad, if you come to that, who shall contend with us? O, Sir, when once we get among your wits without money—impudent rogues who have nothing but genius to recommend 'em—then begins our sport, egad. Why there's Littlewit, now—faith, I forgot to mention him—he, Sir, is at our head; he first laid down that admirable rule, "that when we must give praise, we are to conclude it with a 'but'—"

Belm. Very ingenious, 'faith.

Wit. Aye, and very convenient too, Sir; for it has all the effect of damning, with the appearance of candour.

Belm. Right: and the poor devil of an author may not unaptly be compared to Sisyphus; for when he has rolled the stone to the top of the hill, slap come you, his evil genius, and trundle it down again.

Wit. Just so, by Jupiter! 'Gad, you seem to conceive these things? I'll try to make you one of us; by the Lord Harry, I will.

Belm. You are greatly obliging, Sir—(*Speaks aside to Arabella.*) And yet my ambition—

Enter SERVANT.

But let us go, Witling; there's company.

Ara. 'Tis Belville, as I live! Shall I see him, Sister?—I think I won't—You may send him away. Yet, stay; I think I will see him too—You may show him up. (*Exit Servant.*) Belmour, you are not going?

Belm. Mr. Witling and myself, Madam, have a particular engagement; you must allow us to retire. (*aside*) It were better that Belville should not at the present moment find me here.

Ara. Mr. Witling will make us happy by calling here very frequently?

Wit. You do me honour. I shall certainly profit by your indulgence. [*Exeunt Witling and Belmour.*]

Ara. What a conquest I have made! But here comes Belville—Now, Belinda!

Enter BELVILLE.

Belv. (*Eagerly seizing her hand.*) My life! my, love!—

Ara. (*Coldly.*) Belville so soon returned?

Belv. Can my so speedy return be disagreeable to Arabella?

Ara. No; only a little unexpected. Well, but the curiosities; the petits bijoux; the foreign trinkets; where are they?—I am all impatience till I see 'em.

Belv. Ridiculous, to talk of such trifles at so interesting a meeting.

Ara. So you are returned from Paris without having brought me a single article as a testimony of your esteem, or that might have assisted in increasing mine? An admirable lover, I must confess.

Belv. Is it possible that you can be seriously offended, and on so absurd a pretence?—If, instead of eagerly returning to you, I had protracted my stay in the search of baubles—

Ara. Vastly well, Sir—You upbraid me with a want of sense, because I am good-natured enough to inform you of your neglect. Why, Modely, now—he was gone just the same time that you were, and he could find opportunity—

Belv. Modely, Madam?

Ara. Yes, Modely, Sir. Don't you know the gentleman?

Belv. Perfectly well, Madam; and you are not unacquainted with him, I find.

Ara. Far from it, I assure you, Sir. Lord, he is the most agreeable creature.—Then his manner of presenting any thing is so engaging, that I vow, Belinda, had I not even been prejudiced in his favour, I could never have resisted the temptation.

Bel. Do not be dismayed, Mr. Belville. This is only one of Arabella's whims—by way of trial, as she terms it.

Belv. True, Madam, to try if I am really the infatuated slave whom she imagines me to be.

Ara. Well, Sir, since you have so sagaciously discovered the experiment, I must request the favour that you will instantly leave me.

Belv. If, Madam, I imagined you sincere, no power on earth should keep me.

Ara. Sincere! Did I ever give you any reason to doubt of my sincerity?

Belv. After your late behaviour, how can you, Arabella, ask me such a question?

Ara. But if I say that such is my pleasure—If I declare, on any occasion, that such is my will——

Belv. Right, Madam—a “woman’s will,”—this, no one, I presume, must oppose.

Ara. What! you are for arguing, for reasoning, I suppose? O, I detest a reasoning man! What, to have a confident creature come to one with a why—and a wherefore—about every little trifle—shocking! Nay, I positively insist on it, that he who has the presumption to style himself a lover, has nothing to do with reason.

Belv. Faith, Madam, I begin to think you right; and the attachment which I have shown towards you, after repeated ill-usage, will no doubt convince you that I am totally deprived of mine.

Ara. O, by no means:—for the continually subjecting me to your petulance and ill-humour is surely a proof of your having recovered it.

Belv. Merely my lucid intervals, Madam.

Bel. Admirably rallied, Mr. Belville.

Ara. Yes, he’s a pleasant creature, to be sure (*disconcertedly*).

Belv. Provoking and deceitful woman! (*walks agitated.*)

Ara. Wherefore those epithets, Sir? When an enemy yields, ill treatment is ungenerous. Spare your reproaches, Belville, we are on the point of parting; endeavour then to forget me; for your forgiveness I cannot sue.

Belv. Transporting woman! Do you then confess you’ve done me wrong? (*running to take her hand.*)

Ara. Done you wrong! Is the man mad? Really, actually, absolutely mad? I positively do not understand you, Belville.

Belv. Did you not this very moment insinuate that it would be a virtue in me to endeavour to forget, what you very justly imagined I could not forgive?

Ara. Did I, Belinda?

Bel. You did, my dear.

Ara. Lord, how shocking!—I hardly know how to think I could be so ridiculous. Well, Sir, I sincerely ask your pardon, for I certainly must have been thinking of something else (*with seeming indifference*).

Belv. This is not any longer to be borne. Now, Madam, if it is in your sex's wiles to bring me back, I will acknowledge myself the most abject slave on earth (*going*).

Ara. O, Belinda! (*leans on Belinda, seemingly ready to swoon.*)

Bel. (*aside.*) Surely that is unaffected. My Arabella! speak to me, my love.

Ara. (*recovering, and with the same indifferent air as before,*) Belville here still!—I thought you had been gone.

Belv. Gone! could you imagine me so insensible, Arabella, as to have left you in a state of feeling of which I was myself the cause?

Ara. Yourself the cause? inimitable! And had you vanity enough to imagine that I was actually about to swoon?

Belv. Henceforward I shall not give credit to my own senses. Belinda, your most obedient. [*Exit.*]

Ara. Ha! Not so much as an adieu.

Bel. You have shot, I fear, the arrow beyond the mark. If you should lose him, sister?

Ara. Lose him! No, no, I have too fast hold of his heart, depend upon it.

Bel. You are pretty confident, my dear. But what in the name of wonder could induce you to make him believe your emotion but pretended, when you were really so sensibly affected?

Ara. I would not have had him think otherwise for the universe. He has deserved this treatment—all, and infinitely more. You wouldn't advise me, I suppose, to fly into the arms of the man whose own foolish conduct has been the occasion of all our uneasiness? No, no, it must not be.

Bel. Well; but supposing he should return, do you ever intend to marry him?

Ara. What a question! Lord, my dear, how can I possibly tell you what I don't know myself.

Bel. If you are undetermined with respect to Belville, what do you think of Modely?

Ara. Um—nothing particular. He is an agreeable, lively sort of fellow, and therefore I like his company. Liberty of speech, you know, I grant him.

Bel. And he makes pretty good use of it. There's Witling, too, how d'ye like him?

Ara. O, he is quite out of the question in a serious way: a perfect Narcissus; little better than a fool. Modely, indeed, has somewhat of the fop in his composition; but he is really a man of sense.

Bel. There is Lovemore likewise.

Ara. Aye, there indeed I am puzzled how to act. The wretch is eternally pestering me with his love. He thinks I hate Belville. The only way to free myself from his importunities will be by undeceiving him in that particular.

Bel. What, you mean to deceive him then by immediately marrying Belville?

Ara. Pshaw, my dear, you have the strangest notions—

Bel. Why, Sir Peter has insisted on it.

Ara. And therefore it is the less likely to take place; for whatever Sir Peter has to offer, my Lady will assuredly oppose it; thus I gain time, which is all I have to wish. I shall tease this Belville out of his follies, I warrant. A little of your assistance, however, may be necessary. But see, Sir Peter is coming this way, arguing with my Lady most determinately. They are bickering and snapping at each other, every step they come. Let us avoid them; at least till I can disclose my scheme for managing Belville.

Mark me, Belinda, study well my plan,

So shall you humble proud, imperious man. [Exit.

Enter SIR PETER and LADY POSITIVE.

Lady. Very fine, Sir Peter! very pretty! you and your lawyer yonder, plotting and caballing against my poor niece.

Sir P. Why, you are actually distracted, Lady Positive. Have I not given proof of my affection for your niece—am I not desirous of having her happily married? and do you call that plotting against her?

Lady. Certainly, Sir Peter. Don't you perceive that the child has an aversion to marriage; an absolute antipathy to the wedded state?

Sir P. Poh, poh, never talk to me of antipathies. Why so had I—I am sure I had a mortal antipathy to marriage, till you forced me into it.

Lady. Forced you! I forced you! You who had been for hours dying, as I thought, at my feet?

Sir P. Aye, aye, I remember once, indeed.

Lady. O, you do! vowing and protesting—

Sir P. Yes, yes, I cannot deny that. I shall never forget it; the rental of your estate was lying by your side. You were determined to win me, I suppose, and therefore made a full display of all your charms.

Lady. Slanderer! But this, perhaps, is intended to pass for wit?

Sir P. Nay, my Lady, you succeeded to admiration. Yes, I was prodigiously smitten with your beautiful pair—of title deeds. The complexion of that skin—of parchment—was irresistible. What mortal could withstand such wonder-working instruments—Zounds, Madam, they conveyed away my heart, as glibly as the lands and tenements of your Ladyship's estate.

Lady. Traitor! And is this the end of all your flattery? Did not you compare my eyes to—to—I forget what, and my cheeks to vermilion?

Sir P. Well, Lady Positive, and if I did, that was no great flattery. I take it there was pretty nearly as much sincerity in the compliment as the colour.

Lady. Malicious wretch! How often have you sworn that you prized me above all the wealth in the universe. Nay, did you not even rail against riches, and call my money dirt?

Sir P. I did so, and rightly too; for almost all your possessions lay in land, you know.

Lady. Vastly well, Sir. This you call raillery, I suppose. You may think to triumph in every thing; but Arabella and I will oppose your precious scheme of wedding her to Mr. Belville—I give you my word.

Enter ARABELLA and BELINDA.

Bel. (taking Lady Positive aside.) Come, come, my dear aunt, you should sometimes yield a little to Sir Peter.

Ara. (to Sir Peter, who appears vexed.) But you should certainly allow my Lady an opinion in these matters, Sir Peter?

Sir P. Why so I do. She might always give her opinion, if she would but let me have my own way.

Ara. Your own way! aye, there it is now; but you should occasionally condescend—

Sir P. Condescend! Why zounds, so I do. For example now, I condescended to defer your marriage till to-morrow on purpose to oblige her.

Ara. My marriage, Sir?

Sir P. Your marriage! Yes, Madam, your marriage. Pray what have you to say; what have you to object to that?

Ara. Nay, nothing more, Sir Peter, than that the consent, the agreement of the parties is generally requisite on such occasions.

Sir P. Consent! aye, aye. But you may use your pleasure as to that. We will not quarrel about forms, my dear.

Ara. What a tyrant!—But you will allow me time to consider the matter, Sir Peter?

Sir P. Certainly, certainly. Time! why yqu'll have all the evening, child, and all night to consider about it. Odsbuddikins, time sufficient, I think, for such a matter. But go—retire with your sister, and remember, my dear, that I expect a compliance with my will.

[*Exeunt Ara. and Bel.*]

[*Servant announces DEMUR.*]

O, Mr. Demur, you are opportunely arrived. Now then, since you will oppose me in every thing, Lady Pqsitive, I am determined that the writings shall be immediately produced, and the blanks filled up.

Lady. And I am determined that they shall not, Sir Peter. Perhaps my niece is unwilling to marry the man you have chosen for her; nay, perhaps it is impossible she ever should marry him. Besides, you very well know, that you have not, in fact, the smallest control over her.

Sir P. Indeed! I have some control over my money, however; that will not prove refractory, I believe.

Dem. Well; but my Lady seems to hint at an impossibility. O, if there is any impedimentum, as we say who study the law, that is quite another matter.

Sir P. Impossibility!—Why, where's the impossibility of a girl of twenty marrying a man of five-and-twenty? But if you can prove it either by law or logic, pray do.

Dem. But how am I to act in this business, Sir Peter?

Sir P. Why, according to my instructions, to be sure.

Dem. Well, then, to fill up the blanks. The lady's name I think is—but I am afraid it will be a non-suit. What is your opinion, my Lady?

Lady. O, without doubt, Mr. Demur—*Luce clarius.*

Sir P. No, no, Mr. Demur—'tis neither Lucy, nor Dolly, nor any such foolish name. Lucy Clarus, indeed! The real names are George Belville and Arabella Moreland, so down with 'em, and hold your tongue, Lady Positive..

Lady. 'Tis you who should be silent, Sir Peter. I am absolutely ashamed of you. Your ignorance is astonishing!

Dem. You misconceive my Lady, Sir Peter. She would only insinuate that we have got upon wrong ground; that we have no right in us, as we say who study the law.

Sir P. Aye; but "might overcomes right," as we say who study the world. Eh, Master Demur?

Dem. Sometimes. But the experiment is a little dangerous. I can cite you a case, Anno primo Georgii Secundi——

Sir P. (aside.) O, the devil! If he comes to his law-cases, I shall never get rid of him. No, no, not now, my good friend—I will not trouble you now.

Lady. He is in a precious humour. Come, Mr. Demur, we had better leave him to ponder on the case.

[*Exeunt Lady and Demur.*]

Sir P. They call me obstinate, tyrannical, dogmatical, and I know not what; but good discipline makes good soldiers; and if the head of a family would wish to find respect, he must keep the lesser members of it in proper subordination.—That's my maxim. [Exit.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter LUCY on one side, OLD HARCOURT on the other.

Lucy. Ha! here comes old Mr. Harcourt, and to inquire, I warrant, after his dear.

Old H. Well, Lucy, what news from the lovely Melissa? Any hopes?

Lucy. Why, Sir, I would not absolutely discourage you, and yet there is an obstacle—

Old H. An obstacle? What obstacle? It shall be instantly removed.

Lucy. That may be rather difficult, Sir. Her objection is to your age : but we shall be able to get over it, I believe.

Old H. My good girl ! And were you lavish in my praise ? Did you set forth all my good qualities—the mildness, the tenderness of my disposition ?—

Lucy. O ! yes, Sir ; and highly extolled your munificence. I boldly maintained that you have the spirit and generosity of a prince.

Old H. Aye, aye, and yet—however, you are evidently ardent in my cause—so, there's a shilling as a reward for your attentions to me, and when I am married to Melissa, you shall have another.

Lucy. I really know not *how* to thank you, Sir. But what was I saying ?—O, the spirit and generosity of a prince (*twirling the shilling in her hand*).

Old H. Say no more, say no more. I do not desire any particular acknowledgments. It is given for value received. You have shown a great deal of cleverness in the business ; and I like to encourage merit.

Lucy. (*aside.*) So it appears, indeed (*again playing with the shilling*). The spirit and gen—

Old H. Well, well, but there was no occasion to talk of that. It may fill her head with such an idea of extravagance that—

Lucy. Extravagance ! O, not at all, Sir, as you shall judge. Here are the conditions on which she is willing to become your wife (*reads a paper*). A country-seat, an elegant town-house, a coach and chariot for her own use, a thousand a-year pin-money, and that her jointure, as she expects, no, no, fears—aye, fears was the word—as she fears, I say, that she may one day become a widow ; that her jointure shall be settled at three thousand a year more. Nothing extravagant here, I think—moderate as one could wish.

Old H. Moderate ! why zounds, I don't expend above five hundred a year, and yet I have every thing as comfortable, aye, and as convenient too—

Lucy. Comfortable and convenient? comfortable and convenient! (*Aside*) What an ourang outang! O, lud, lud, you haven't a proper notion of things. Your lady, Sir, has taste—a truly fine taste. She will introduce you to the beau monde. You will have colonels and captains at your breakfast table—

Old H. (aside.) Ay, and at my dinner table too—

Lucy. O, there's another thing, she says you must positively purchase a title.

Old H. A what? a title?

Lucy. Yes, Sir, a title. She wishes you to be made a lord; but if that can't be managed (though it's pretty easy now-a-days), why she'll be content with a baronetage.

Old H. Zounds! has she a mind to ruin me before marriage? Why, what the devil—

Lucy. Ruin! what a word! Lord, Sir, one would imagine you lived in Cheapside, and that you were fearful of hurting your credit, or your character.

Old H. Heyday! how the girl prates—why, zooks, mistress, is no one but the trader, think you, solicitous about his credit? his character?

Lucy. Certainly not, Sir. Did you ever hear a man of fashion talk about his credit? his character? O dear, Sir, there are no such words in the fine gentleman's vocabulary, believe me. But you are alarmed, I find, at the expense. Suppose we compound the matter with her, and make you a simple knight.

Old H. Yes, and a damned simple knight I should be.

Lucy. O fie, Sir. You who are so greatly admired by your mistress. What a charming fellow! exclaimed she; so sprightly, so gallant, and then he says so many soft things—

Old H. Soft things! yes, I was always famous for those—every body knows that.

Lucy. But I had nearly forgot. Above all, she insists—O, lud, as I live and breathe, here comes Captain Moreton.

Old H. All the better. I mean to consult him on the business.

[Enter YOUNG HARCOURT.]

He will favour me with his opinion like a true friend—I am sure he will.

Har. That you may depend on, Sir. My regard for honest Jack will prompt me to that.

Lucy. Well then, Sir, above all things, she insists that, on some pretence or other, you immediately disinherit your son.

Old H. What, Jack? Disinherit Jack?—no, no. Yet he has been long in India, and by this time, I suppose, is as rich as Croesus. But then if he should return, as many an honest fellow has done, no richer than he went. Aye, that may be, faith—No, no, I can never think of disinheriting Jack—that won't do.

Lucy. Mighty well, Sir. Then you must think no more of the lady—

Old H. But how the deuce, and with any show of reason, can I carry it in the eye of the world?

Lucy. In the eye of the world? O, is that all, Sir? Why let me see: I think we might—but then you must handsomely reward me.—I think—that is, if you and I were to lay our heads together, Sir—yes, I really think we might trump up something about (*whispers*) his illegitimacy. You take me, Sir?

Old H. Illegitimacy! Why, what the devil! Set about bastardizing my son.

Lucy. Pardon me, Sir, but you express the thing a little too rudely. There's nothing uncommon in the practice, believe me; and as you are to be so great a gainer by your marriage with Melissa, why—

Old H. Gainer! poh, poh—you mistake the matter entirely. Sir Peter has insisted, on account of the largeness of my estates, that the lady's fortune shall be settled wholly on herself.

Lucy. I know, I know. But I am speaking of the happiness you are to gain, and not of the money. Merciful heaven! what is fortune, what is wealth, when

compared, with the possession of so beauteous a creature.

Old H. Why yes—but then to stigmatize his mother, and my wife as—

Lucy. Hold, hold—no ugly expressions, I desire. In my ardour to serve you, I did not sufficiently consider the consequences. But stay, Sir, stay. There is another, and perhaps a better way to bring the matter about; you may remember, Sir, that at the birth of your son,—of honest Jack, (*winks at Har.*) my mother, who is a mighty good sort of woman (though I say it, who ought not to say it)—yes, Sir, my mother was the nurse. Now with her assistance—and I am very confident she would be ever ready to do a good-natured thing,—with her assistance, I say, it would not be very difficult to prove him to be a changeling. You comprehend me, Sir?

Har. (aside.) The jade! She has a mind to prove the old gentleman a changeling, it would seem. However, as the girl has only my success with Melissa in view, I will at present submit to her humour. She has much vivacity, with a cunning which fits her admirably for the management of an amour. It may not be amiss, at the same time, to see how my honoured sire will behave on this notable proposition.

Lucy. There, Sir,—you find how perfectly, how completely I can manage for you.—Your mistress will be gratified: the honour of yourself and lady will be nicely preserved, (which, it is true, would not have been the case in what I first propounded to you,) while the world, which you are so much afraid of, will, instead of blaming, highly commend you, for thus getting rid of a seemingly supposititious child.

Old H. Why, you are an admirable contriver, Mrs. Lucy—an excellent plotter, I must confess. But your health and spirits are such, that every thing is easy to you, I suppose.

Lucy. Health and spirits! alas! Sir, how little do you

know me. A year ago, indeed, Lucy was gayest of the gay; but ever since the moment, the unfortunate moment that the urchin wounded me—O, that urchin, that urchin!—I was walking in the field by the side of our garden, Sir, when my eye first met——

Old H. Poor girl, poor girl! you must be more upon your guard—the hedgehog is a very——

Lucy. Sir! hedgehog!—O, I comprehend, I recollect—“urchin or hedgehog”—the terms are used indifferently in zoology.—But, Sir, ha! ha! ha! you have made a curious kind of mistake here.—The urchin I was telling you of, is the little god of love.

Old H. The little god of love! then why the deuce didn't you say so—why do you go about with me thus—why not speak to be understood?

Lucy. Lord, Sir,—I spoke plain enough, I am sure. (*Aside*) This old man is so exceedingly ignorant, that there is scarcely any possibility of conversing with him. He knows no more about Cupid than I do of the man in the moon.—The ancient mythology, indeed, is wholly unknown to him: he is little read in poetry; and if I use any thing like a figurative language, he understands me as much as I should an Egyptian hieroglyphic. (*Aloud*) Well, Sir, what have you to say to my scheme?

Old H. I cannot think of it.—For as he is unquestionably my lawful heir——

Lucy. Lawful heir! jiminy, jiminy, how you provoke one! Shall a trifle like this be set in opposition to the force of love? *Omnia vincit amor*, as the poet says; and which in English means—that is, as Mr. William (he was bred at Oxford) informs me—“Love subdues pretty girls,” and this, indeed, he kindly taught me long ago.

Har. And you, Mrs. Lucy, are sensible of his kindness? you have profited by his lessons, no doubt——

Lucy. Something of a smattering, Sir. But I could tell both him and you, that this same Cupid conquers pretty gentlemen, too—*Ecce signum* (*aside, and pointing to Old Har.*) as my Adonis would say.

Old H. A very gallant, a fine-spirited fellow, this Mr. William.

Lucy. O, incomparably so. I do really think he is the gallantest—that is, next to yourself, Sir—yes, Sir, next to you, I do really think that he is the gallantest man in the kingdom. But I will give you an instance—you must know then that I am to be numbered among the elegant few, who

“ In trim gardens take their pleasure,”

as Milton so exquisitely has it; and that I have formed on the brink of our canal at Positive-place, one of the charmingest parterres in the world. Now, I was lately amusing myself by transplanting, into this parterre, that beautiful little flower called Venus’s looking-glass. Well, Sir, at the very moment of doing this, Mr. William came up, and seeing what I was about, he declared, and in a tone and manner theatrically delightful; he declared, I say, with a truly histrionic air, that the name which had been given to the flowret was no way fitting, and that it could only belong to the stream, the translucent stream over which I was bending, and which reflected the image of my enchanting self. There, Sir—what d’y’e say to that, Sir? If the “Academy of Compliments,” (and the volume is to be found, I believe, in the library) if the Academy of Compliments exhibits any thing equal to it, I will forfeit my life.

Old H. Very prettily—very handsomely said, indeed.

Lucy. Yes, Sir,—and I wish you had an opportunity of showing off with Melissa, in a like kind of way. It would go near to clench your business, I believe: for she is extravagantly fond of praise. I had a plan, indeed, to bring her to the very spot I have been telling you of.—She to be employed in precisely the same manner that I was, while you were to be accidentally passing at the time. You might even have repeated the very words of my inamorato:—the conceit would not have disgraced you in the least.—A second-hand compliment, it is true;

but that was of little consequence, as it would only have been known to ourselves. This, I say, was my intention—no bad contrivance—and I should certainly have given it effect. But as my mistress had been complaining of your want of kindness towards her, and as she had of late appeared very much dejected in consequence, I was fearful of proceeding in the matter, Sir, lest at sight of the water, she might in despair have been led to drown herself, Sir.

Old H. Bless me, bless me, that would have been a melancholy event, indeed.

Lucy. Very, Sir: and as it was so likely to happen, you will, I am sure, commend my prudence for not bringing her in the way of temptation, Sir.

Old H. Ah, Lucy,—you are a true friend—

Lucy. So you will say by-and-by, Sir, when you know all my projects.—(*Aside*) He seems highly delighted, and if fortune favours me, I may be rewarded with another shilling.—Well, Sir, I once more ask you, will my services be accepted, as I have proposed, or not?

Old H. I must answer you as before: for since I do not see the necessity—

Lucy. Mighty well, Sir. Then as I have already told you, you must think no more of the lady.

Old H. No!—But does not nature direct me in the care of my son?

Lucy. Nature! fiddle-de-dec—a poor sneaking creature whom nobody knows: and then for beauty—bah!—In fine, Sir, Nature is only to be admired when “trickt and frounc’t” by her handmaid Art,—witness the Hot-tentot Venus before she has strung on her beads, or the toast of the day before she has put on her rouge. But you must list my instructions, Sir, else I have positively done,—*hæ tibi erunt artes*, that is (as you know who tells me) “these are love’s pranks, and these you must play.” Yes, Sir, it is to art, and art alone, that we should trust: it is by that we succeed in the world—

"Seamen by sailing arts their vessels move :
Art guides the chariot—art instructs to love."

So says Mr. Ovid, Sir; and whatever may be thought of him in regard to other matters, in our affairs he must be admitted as a competent judge.

Old H. Certainly, certainly. But why disinherit Jack? Why does your mistress insist on that?

Lucy. What a question! Why, that you may make the more ample provision for her children, to be sure.

Old H. That I may make the more ample provision for—for—her—hey? (*stammering.*) What—

Lucy. That is, for your other children. You understand me?

Old H. Other children—Why zounds, I have no child but Jack.

Lucy. Aye; but those you are to have, I mean. You must have others, you know.—

Old H. Eh? must! True, true, the children I *am* to have—very true.

Lucy. Yes, Sir, they will certainly come—you may depend on that.

Old H. You think so?

Lucy. O, quite sure of it, Sir; and must be provided for.

Harc. Right, Lucy, right—they must be provided for. (*Aside*) So now to put his fatherly affection to the test. (*To Old H.*) And as to Jack, he is rich enough, I warrant.

Old H. No doubt, no doubt. But though Mrs. Lucy thinks so lightly of the matter, won't it appear plaguy, unnatural?

Harc. Not at all, Sir—not at all. Self is the first consideration with every man.

Old H. Very true. But then I have so great a regard for him: so very particular an affection that—

Harc. No question, Sir. I never doubted it. Yet my regard for him is infinitely superior to yours, believe me.

Old H. Hey, what? Your regard for him infinitely superior to mine—How the devil can that be?

Harc. Pardon me, Sir, but I am more attached to him than to any man on earth. I think him—he is—

Old H. Say no more, say no more,—I have always had a favourable account of him, it is true. Yes, yes, Jack's well enough, to be sure.

Harc. Well enough! Sir, I know more of him than you do. Well enough! In my opinion he is not to be equalled. I love, reverence, and esteem him in so high a degree that—

Old H. Hold, hold, you grow extravagant. If Jack were present; he would blush to hear you.

Harc. Blush! you surely forget, Sir, that he was born in Tipperary.

Old H. That's true, faith.

Harc. And christened with the water of Shannon. Blush, indeed! My dear Sir, what could you possibly be thinking of? Yes, yes, I am tolerably well acquainted with your son's history—a pretty close friend—he never had a thought concealed from me.

Old H. Not a thought concealed from you? The devil! I didn't think you were so intimate as that, I must confess.

Harc. Intimate! O, dear Sir, Jack and I have but one heart, one soul.

Old H. One heart, one soul. Gad, you'll endeavour to persuade me by-and-by, I suppose, that you have but one body—eh?

Harc. No, no, Sir, I must not go so far as that; no, no.

Lucy. (to Old H.) Well, Sir, what is your determination? Melissa will grow impatient.

Old H. Why, really, Mrs. Lucy, your Lady is so very extravagant in her demands, that I cannot immediately come to a determination. But I will return to Sir Peter, and consult him on the matter. Captain Moreton, your servant.

[*Exit Old Harcourt.*]

Harc. Well, Lucy, shall we succeed?

Lucy. No doubt of it, Sir. The pretended extravagance of Melissa will prove an excellent choke-pear. But if you have a mind to banter the old gentleman a little, you have the finest opportunity in the world. He has lately purchased a captaincy in the what-dye-call-um militia—a redcoat, you know, for the Ladies!—and this very evening purposes visiting his mistress in a military dress!

Harc. A soldier! Ha! ha! ha!

Lucy. Yes, Sir, and a terrible figure he makes, I assure you. The enemy, at sight of him, would take to his heels, I am very sure.

Harc. Well said, Lucy. Egad, I'll follow the captain to Sir Peter's, and under the pretence of not knowing him—you guess the rest?

Lucy. Yes, yes—away, away. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

Enter ARABELLA, followed by LOVEMORE.

Ara. Again this impertinent intrusion. Leave me, Sir! Is this your boasted friendship? this the man in whom Belville places an entire confidence?

Lovem. If, Madam, the cruel destiny of my friend denies him that happiness which he has so long aspired to, does it consequently follow that I should be alike unhappy?

Ara. This, from any other than Mr. Lovemore, were pardonable; and permit me to assure you, Sir, that had I even entertained for you the greatest partiality, this treachery towards a man so eminently your friend, would have driven you from my thoughts for ever.

Lovem. Believe me, Miss Moreland, when I declare to you that I have concealed the growing passion as long as it was in my power; and, as I foresaw the utter impossibility of your union with Mr. Belville, I have ventured to

declare my sentiments.—If I have offended, Madam, demand an expiation, and if you do not find me the most repentant criminal—

Ara. The only expiation I require, Mr. Lovemore, is, that you will forego your solicitations. The virtues of Mr. Belville raise him, in my opinion, so far above all other men, that I esteem him infinitely more than I have words to give it utterance.

Lovem. My esteem, Madam, is at least equal to yours, —this I will dare venture to affirm. He has ever been to me, indeed, the truest, kindest friend.

Ara. And yet, Sir, how would you repay him ?

Lovem. Spare, in pity spare me. Yet I love you, Madam, and to such excess, that could I but obtain from you a return, I would not hesitate to break all other ties.

Ara. A very ingenuous confession, Mr. Lovemore. It is, however, so far from captivating me, that I cannot but abhor the person whose mind is so degenerate.

Lovem. I pretend not to exculpate myself, entirely, Madam. Yet, when a sincere affection has taken possession of the heart, it is not an easy matter to subdue it.

Ara. In those sentiments I concur with you, Sir ; and give you for answer, that Mr. Belville is the man whose happiness or misery must be mine.

Lovem. Madam !

Ara. What I tell you, Sir, is true ; and though my conduct may have appeared rather contradictory, this declaration will, I hope, be sufficient for you.—After so much candour on my side, I trust you will be as generous on yours.

Lovem. I understand you, Madam, and will at least endeavour—

Ara. In doing which, Mr. Lovemore, you will receive not only my thanks, but praise.

Lovem. But do you think, Miss Moreland, that I shall receive the praise of others in making such a sacrifice ?

Ara. Most assuredly, Sir : sacrifices at the shrine of friendship are of late become so rare, that you cannot

fail of meeting with the approbation of the virtuous few, at least. '

Lovem. Yet, Madam, how arduous is the task?

Ara. If so, Sir, it will redound the more to your honour. Come, come, Mr. Lovemore, when you have practised a little in the school of virtue, its rules will become familiar to you. Consider, Sir, how insurmountable is the obstacle, where you are endeavouring to gain a heart already given to another—and to whom?—to Mr. Belville. Deceive not, then, the man who believes you to be as sincerely his friend, as I know him to be yours.

Lovem. I am now convinced, Madam, how infinitely I have wronged both him and you; but as I was ignorant of your attachment to Mr. Belville, my conduct, I trust, is not quite so inexcusable as it otherwise might have been.

Ara. I blame you not, on my part, Sir, but on your friend's; 'tis he whom you have wronged—not me.

Lovem. Repentance, Madam, seldom comes too late. I now behold my folly, nay, my treachery—if you will have it so—in such an odious light, that if a life devoted to the service of you and Mr. Belville will in any measure atone—

Ara. Say no more, Mr. Lovemore; I shall rely entirely on your honour. Mr. Belville is totally unacquainted with this affair; and if it be in my power to keep it from his knowledge, you may rest assured I will.

Lovem. Your generous behaviour, Madam, overwhelms me with confusion.

Ara. Remember, Mr. Lovemore, that it is not wholly disinterested.

Lovem. I have the greatest reason to imagine, Miss Moreland, that if it were, you would, notwithstanding, act in the same ingenuous manner.

Ara. I am obliged to you for your good opinion, Sir; but you must absolutely promise me not to acquaint Belville with my sentiments in his favour.

Lovem. You may command me, Madam. Yet to have been the messenger of such agreeable news would have given me infinite pleasure.

Ara. I have particular reasons for wishing it to be kept secret, at least, for the present. Mr. Lovemore, your servant. [*Exit Arabella.*]

Lovem. (solus.) What an amiable woman. 'Tis in vain to struggle with my passion—Yet, Belville—would to heaven I had never known him!

[*Enter MODELY.*]

Modely! why I did not expect to see you these two months. Prithee, how long have you been here?

Mod. Not a week. I quitted Paris with some regret; but as our friend Belville was impatient to return, I chose to accompany him.

Lovem. What, is Belville returned?

Mod. Yes, Sir, there was no possibility of keeping him an hour longer—Nay, during our stay, he was incessantly tormenting himself with some imaginary evil.

Lovem. He is of a most miserable disposition.

Mod. Miserable indeed! And I am surprised that even you, Lovemore, have been exempt from his suspicion.

Lovem. For that, Sir, I am indebted to his friendship, and the confidence he reposes in me.

Mod. And yet, with all due deference to you, Mr. Lovemore, there are men in whom he might equally confide.

Lovem. Of that I am perfectly sensible.

Mod. What think you, Sir, of his treatment of Mr. Belmour—a man to whom he is under the greatest obligations?

Lovem. Ingratitude, Mr. Modely, is so inherent in mankind, that we must not be surprised at so often meeting with it.

Mod. I never am surprised, but when I meet with it in persons of sensibility and understanding. In others, it may be considered as a weakness; in them 'tis criminal.—

But yonder is Sir Peter ; excuse me, I would speak with him. *[Exit Modely.]*

Lovem. There is something mysterious both in the words and actions of that man. Should he suspect me—

[Enter BELVILLE.]

Ha ! Belville here !—*(aside)* The man I would have shunned. Dissimulation must now, however—Belville, most welcome. Your absence, my friend, has been the less supportable, as I have but seldom had the happiness to hear from you.

Belv. That, your goodness will, I am sure, excuse. You are very sensible, Lovemore, with what a heavy heart I took my leave of Arabella ; you may imagine, likewise, that my every thought has been devoted to her—My stay has been but short, and I am now returned to meet—a faithless woman, and a treacherous friend—that monster, Belmour !

Lovem. Have a care ; accuse him not unjustly.

Belv. Unjustly ! No, worthy Lovemore, he is guilty of the greatest crimes—crimes that an honest man would blush to mention.

Lovem. (aside.) 'Sdeath, how he wounds me !

Belv. Tell me, Lovemore, what punishment, think you, deserves that man who pretends to be the friend of another, yet would willingly rob him of what he holds most dear—of his mistress ?—You tremble—I see, I am sure, you feel for my distress.

Lovem. Feel ! yes, Belville, I feel as much, nay, perhaps more than you do.

Belv. Thou generous, worthy man ! Thus let me hold thee to my heart ! *(embraces Lovemore.)*

Lovem. (aside.) This is too painful ; I must unbosom myself, notwithstanding the injunction of Arabella.—I have something particular, my friend, to impart.—But we are interrupted ; let us walk this way.

[Exeunt.]

Enter SIR PETER POSITIVE and OLD HARCOURT, on one side, YOUNG HARCOURT on the other.

Old H. (awkwardly dressed in regimentals.) Zounds! Jack's friend! What evil genius has brought him hither at this time?—And when the lovely Melissa—Well, he doesn't know me, I believe. Ha! I'll keep an eye on him (*stands aside*).

Har. Fire and fury! Sir Peter Positive, as I live. What's to be done now? Should he guess my business, all at once were lost. Sir Peter, your most obedient, very humble servant (*goes up to him with a familiar air*).

Sir P. Sir, I really have not the honour of knowing you. (*Aside*) I don't like his looks.

Har. (aside.) What the devil shall I say?—Pardon my abruptness, Sir, but having little time to spare—

Sir P. Well, well, your business, your business, if you please.

Har. Why, you must know, Sir, that being lately returned from India—my old friend Jack Harcourt, who is now in Calcutta, son of Charles Harcourt, of the county of Somerset, Esquire, has requested me—You know something of the father, I believe—a curmudgeonly old—

Old H. Hem! hem!

Har. But no matter—my friend Jack Harcourt, Sir, who, to be sure, is one of the best-hearted fellows in all India—Jack, I say, Sir.

Sir P. Well, well, to your business; I have heard of him.

Har. O I dare swear it, Sir; his fame has spread from the Arctic to the Antarctic. He is as well known at Otaheite, as Mr. — You know who I mean, Sir. (*Aside*) What the plague shall I say, to get him into a good humour—

Sir P. Know who you mean, Sir?—Not I, faith, Sir, —but your business.—

Har. My business?—Right, Sir, right. Egad, I had quite forgot my business.

Sir P. (aside.) Egad, I thought as much.

Har. Why, Sir, my business, in a very few words, is—

Sir P. Ay do, pray, let it be in as few words as possible.

Har. My business here, Sir—(*Aside*) How the deuce shall I call off his suspicion?—My business here, Sir, is, to inform you, that Jack Harcourt, my old friend, Sir, who has ever held you in the highest veneration and esteem—

Sir P. I am greatly honoured by him, indeed, Sir.

Har. Has sent you over by me, his trusty friend and agent, a small present.

Sir P. A present? Pray, Sir, of what kind may it be? I do not remember that Mr. Harcourt, or any of his family were ever under any obligations to me; and as to a present—Pray, Sir, of what value?

Har. O dear, Sir, a very trifle; only a lack of rupees.

Sir P. A lack of rupees! Pray, Sir, how much may that be in English?

Har. About twelve thousand pounds, Sir.

Old H. (comes forward.) Twelve thousand pounds—A present of twelve thousand pounds! What an inconsiderate young dog!

Har. Inconsiderate! Pray, Sir, what right have you to—Inconsiderate?—What you, I suppose, would have presented him with a silver cup, or procured him the freedom of Calcutta in a box, or—No, no, Sir, we have other notions in India; very different notions, believe me.

Sir P. A princely present, I must confess. Do pray, Sir, walk out of the cold—after being accustomed to the heats of India, the air of England may be hurtful to you.

Har. Not at all, Sir, not at all—But honest Jack! I wish we had him here. (*To Old H.*) Don't you think him a devilish honest fellow, eh, old gentleman?

Old H. Yes, yes—but Jack has little to boast on that account, for honesty is hereditary in his family.

Har. Hereditary!—honesty hereditary in his family—ha! ha! ha! Why, Sir, I have heard—

Old H. Zounds! Sir—what have you heard?

Har. Sir? Ha! ha! ha! But you are related to him, perhaps; or some very particular friend.—You seem, indeed, to be his other self.

Old H. Other self! 'sblood, Sir, I am himself, Mr. Harcourt himself, Sir.

Har. Indeed—Why, what the devil! you are plaguily metamorphosed since I saw you.

Old H. O, I forgot to tell you of the commission I lately purchased. The truth is, we have been out this morning. I never wear my regimentals but on a field day, for fear they should be spoiled.

Har. Very prudent, upon my word; and a very becoming uniform.

Old H. Yes, yes, pretty enough.

Har. (*aside.*) Ha! Yonder comes Melissa—how the plague shall I get him away. Jack has not forgot you, Sir, he has remitted you a very handsome sum.—Pray did I mention this before?

Old H. Not a word. I wonder you didn't think of it.

Har. Egad it's a wonder I thought of it now; but—

Old H. What, a lack of rupees?

Har. O, great deal more, Sir. But walk this way.

Old H. You'll excuse me, Sir Peter, I have a little business with this gentleman—

Sir P. Certainly, Mr. Harcourt. (*To Young Har.*) But, Sir, I am somewhat in want of money at present, and if the rupees—Where shall I have the honour of waiting on you?

Har. The rupees! Gadso! that's true. Why, Sir, I am not quite prepared—there are some few things to be settled.—I'll let you know—I'll let you know, Sir. So, so, tolerably well off.—But that I may not be dunned for these rupees, I must not appear here again, nor in my own character, till I have defeated

my rival (my rival, ha! ha!) and can boldly lay claim to Melissa.

[*Exeunt Old and Young Harcourt.*]

(*As Sir Peter is going off on the other side, he meets Arabella.*)

Sir P. So, Mrs. Arabella, well met. Have you come to any determination?—But I will have it so. Mr. Belville shall be your husband.

Ara. But, Sir, Mr. Belville,—the argument I have to—

Sir P. Argument! why what's the use of argument, when a man's determined? I am resolved, I tell you—fixt.—So there's an end of that.

Ara. But if I can demonstrate to you, Sir, that—

Sir P. Psha, nonsense. Demonstrate! I hate demonstration, it's the absurdest thing in the world.

Ara. Really, my dear uncle, you are so very positive—

Sir P. Positive! Look ye there now. I never insisted on any thing in my life, without being told that I was too positive!

Ara. I could always wish to pay a deference to your opinion, Sir Peter, but there is at present an insurmountable bar—

Sir P. Very well, Mrs. Arabella, very well. But as to the thousands I promised to clap to your portion—not a shilling, unless you marry Belville. So there's an end of that.

Ara. To confess the truth, Sir Peter, I have not the aversion for Mr. Belville that you may perhaps imagine; but the jealousy and fretfulness of his temper alarm me. I must, I will make further trial of it.

Sir P. No aversion, and yet refuse to marry him! Was there ever such contradiction, such perverseness, such obstinacy!

Ara. Come, come, Sir Peter, for once indulge me in my humour. I freely tell you that I can never submit to any plan of life, however eligible it may appear to you, that runs directly counter to my own idea of happiness.

Sir P. Well, well, say no more. I have done with you entirely; and Belville shall have done with you likewise. So there's an end of that.

[*Exit Sir Peter.*]

Ara. (sola.) A teasing old fool! I do really think I shall marry Belville a year or two sooner than I intended, to get out of his clutches.

Re-enter SIR PETER following WILLIAM, servant to Arabella.

Sir P. (aside) What can this fellow want now?

Will. A letter, Madam.

Sir P. A letter; aye, aye, a billet-doux, no doubt. Thus it is day after day; novels and love-letters are her only study. 'Sdeath, had I a daughter, she should never learn to read—she should never—

Ara. Thank you, good William. [*Exit Arabella.*]

Sir P. Good William! yes, yes, a clear case. Sirrah, who gave you that letter?

Will. A certain gentleman, Sir, who—

Sir Pet. What gentleman? Did he come from Mr. Belville?

Will. Mr. Belville! O, no, Sir, we have done with him, I believe.

Sir P. Familiar puppy!—Well, but from whom, “good William”?

Will. Oh, ho!—O dear Sir, what betray—

Sir P. O conscience, I suppose. Come, come, here's the fuller's earth that will take out every stain. (*Gives him money.*)

Will. Really, Sir Peter, you have such winning ways.

Sir P. Well, who was it, William, eh?

Will. Why, Sir, it was—it was—I don't know, as I hope to be saved, Sir. (*Putting the money into his pocket.*)

Sir P. Not know! But don't you think it came from—you understand me?—

Will. Not I, 'faith, Sir. Davus sum, non Œdipus.

Sir P. Davus sum—Why what the devil is the fellow jabbering now—Latin?

Will. Yes, Sir. I was formerly servitor at Brazen-nose College.

Sir P. Brazen-face college. Aye, aye, very likely.

Will. But perhaps you don't understand Latin, Sir Peter. I'll translate it, if you please. Davus sum, that is as much as to say, "I am William,"—non Œdipus, "and not a conjuror."

Sir P. You are exceedingly obliging, Sir; and now comes my translation. So without further ceremony, I translate you from this house to the street.

Will. Lord, Sir—what d'ye mean, Sir?

Sir P. Rogue that thou art!—begone, or—

Will. It is somewhat ungenerous, Sir Peter, to call me rogue at the very instant that you are endeavouring to make me one—at the very moment that you would practise bribery on one who is—is—such a stickler for his honour, who is so tenacious of his fame.

Sir P. A stickler for his honour! tenacious of his fame!—Rascal—how dare you take my money, and then—

Will. O, civility, civility, Sir! It had been rudeness, indeed, to have refused the favours of Sir Peter Positive.

Sir P. Here's a precious fellow! Plague take your civility.

Will. You are very right, indeed, Sir Peter. Plague take it, say I. It has always stood in my way. I lost my last place on account of my civility—I'll tell you how it happened, Sir.

Sir P. Slave! rascal! Get out of my house this instant.

Will. Sir, I am your niece's servant, not your's.

Sir P. My niece's servant!

Will. Yes, Sir. But perhaps you had rather I should be enrolled as your's. I should think myself greatly honoured by the service, and can venture to say that you

would find me exceedingly useful ; for without playing the coxcomb in the matter—

Sings.

“ I a handy lad am,
On a message I can go—
Or slip a billet-doux,
With—‘ your humble servant, Madam ! ’ ”

Sir P. I do not question your abilities in the least, fellow ; and I dare swear that my Lady, my wife, would hold you particularly useful. But get out of my house this instant—begone this moment, or—(*Exit William.*) The rascal is absolutely laughing at my situation. I am become the mockery of my servants. O, Lady Positive, Lady Positive, to what indignities have you subjected me !—Arabella ! Arabella, child ! (*calling.*) No one to answer me ! Was ever man so plagued ? Was ever man so tormented ? Lady Positive !—Lady Positive !

Enter LADY POSITIVE.

Lady. What is the meaning of this disturbance ? Must you be always in alto, Sir Peter ; shall I never teach you moderato ?

Sir P. The villain ! to provoke me thus—I who am so calm, so mild.

Lady. What’s the cause ; what’s the matter, Sir Peter ?

Sir P. Why William, my dear. I was only preparing to turn him into the street, and he had the insolence to tell me that he is my niece’s servant, and not mine.

Lady. Well ; but how has he offended ? Why is he to be turned into the street ?

Sir P. Why you must know, my Lady, that I have detected him bringing letters to Arabella ; love-letters, I warrant.

Lady. Well, Sir Peter, and what then ?

Sir P. What then ? Mercy on us ! would you encourage these enormities ? Would you defend your niece’s conduct ?

Lady. You surely forget that you were yourself a writer of love-letters. I have them now in my possession.

Sir P. No, no, my Lady. I am vexed at Arabella's general behaviour. To find her pleased, nay, absolutely charmed with the impertinence of every well-dressed fop she meets with, is intolerable.

Lady. O, merely arising from her youth and vivacity. She is not wanting in sense, I am sure; and though, like a skilful fencer, she may sometimes drop her point, and seem unguarded, she is not the less secure, depend on it. But I must return to my company, and you would do well to go along with me, Sir Peter. [*Exit Lady P.*]

Sir P. I'll follow you, my Lady, I'll follow you. A very well-meaning woman; but obstinate, plaguy obstinate. Never to listen to reason—always bigoted to one's own opinion. I don't know any thing more hateful.

[*Exit Sir Peter.*]

Enter MELISSA, alone.

How unfortunate, how unhappy am I! To be obliged to listen to the odious addresses of this Mr. Harcourt. How whimsical, at the same time, is my situation—loved by, and loving his son. Well, as Sir Peter is so obstinately bent on my marrying the father, I must endeavour to conceal the state of my heart a little longer. My guardian is rich, and it would not therefore be altogether prudent to quarrel with him. I must trust then entirely to chance. Yes, chance may bring me a reprieve.

Enter Footman, followed by YOUNG HARCOURT, dressed in a plain frock, &c. like a servant.

Har. My dear, my ever dear and amiable Melissa!

Mel. Captain Harcourt!

Har. You will pardon me for appearing before you in this unseemly garb—but the necessity—

Mel. O, I know the necessity, and sincerely lament it. That you should be obliged to assume such a character,

though but for a moment, is extremely distressing to me.

Har. Think no more of that. What would not Henry undergo? what character would he not assume to obtain an interview with his Emma?

“ More secret ways the careful Henry takes,
His squires, his arms, his equipage forsakes :
In borrowed name, and false attire array'd,
Oft he finds means to see the beauteous maid.”

Besides, in the art of counterfeiting, you know, I am a proficient (*smiling*).

Mel. Indeed?—Alas! then, poor Melissa.

Har. Ah, kill me not by so ungenerous a thought—I am not, cannot be a counterfeit in my love to thee. I merely alluded to my having taken the name of Moreton, and for purposes you are sufficiently acquainted with.

Mel. Say no more, I rely implicitly on your honour.

Har. Once more, then, accept my thanks. But how goes on your affair with Squire Harcourt? Notwithstanding your partiality for the therefore happy Captain, I fear, greatly fear, that the united power of Sir Peter and my father may yet compel you——

Mel. You have nothing to apprehend from any earthly power, I give you my word. I have engaged my Cousin Charlotte, at whose house I usually reside, to use her interest with Sir Peter in your favour. She is a very great favourite with the knight, and has promised, when a proper opportunity offers, to break the matter to him as I desired.

Har. In that assurance I will rest content.

• *Mel.* As I live, here comes Sir Peter.

Har. The devil! if he should recollect me, now—A letter, Madam, from the Lady Worthy (*bows*).*

Mel. My compliments to your lady, and I shall shortly have the pleasure of seeing her. [*Exit Melissa.*]

Sir P. Another letter-bearer, by Jupiter!—a damn'd sly looking fellow. (*Har. hides his face, in part, with his hat, and endeavours to go out.*) Hollo! John, Thomas—

come hither, my lad ; you brought a letter just now from Lady——

Har. Yes, Sir, from Lady, Lady——

Sir P. Aye, true—what is your lady's name ?

Har. My lady's name?—(*Aside*) What the devil was the name I mentioned to Melissa—My lady's name, Sir ?

Sir P. Yes, your lady's name, Sir. Why what the plague, have you forgot your lady's name ?

Har. Forgot?—O, no, Sir. Forgot, indeed ! ridiculous enough, forgot my lady's name?—that would be pleasant, to be sure. Matchless, Lady Matchless is the name.

Sir P. Matchless ! why you delivered the letter to my ward in the name of Worthy.

Har. Worthy ! Yes, yes, Sir,—um, um.—Worthy is the name of the lady who sent me with the letter ; she is now on a visit at my mistress's, Sir ; you quite confounded me by your question, Sir.

Sir P. O, I dare say I did, Sir.

Har. For not at first knowing, Sir, whether you meant to inquire the name of my lady, or—you understand me, Sir ?

Sir P. Perfectly, perfectly. Yes, yes, I fancy I understand. Yes, yes, I believe I understand you. The name of Matchless, however, must surely belong to yourself. This marvellous story—

Har. Pardon me, Sir Peter,—but you are strangely unbelieving. Pray what have I advanced so very wonderful that—Sir, I detest the marvellous as much as you can. Sir, I am a lover of truth. Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed—

Sir P. (*aside.*) So, so, here is another of the party-coloured gentry playing off his latinity—why what a set of puppies.—

Har. But you seem to question my honour, Sir. What assurance shall I give you—

Sir P. Sir, you have given me enough of your assurance already : for may I be—if I ever met with a

more impudent fellow (*aside*) Arabella's seryant expected, in the whole course of my life.

Har. O, my dear Sir, you are pleased to flatter: you will make me too vain,—to ascribe to me the prime qualification of a footman! No, Sir, no—I have no claim to such distinction: none, I give you my word. Little better than a greenhorn—a very novice, a freshman, nothing more.

Sir P. A novice! But you have another letter in your pocket, I presume, from your master.

Har. Master, Sir!

Sir P. Yes, master, Sir. An epistle from your master to Lady Positive. That, Sir, you may deliver to me.

Har. Really, Sir, I have not the honour of calling any one master; and I do assure you, that the letter I delivered to Madam Melissa, was the only one with which I was charged.

Sir P. Come, come, you scoundrel—(*holds up his cane.*)

Har. Scoundrel! and a threat; 'sblood, Sir, I am an Englishman—a true-born Englishman.

Sir P. Englishman! But sheer off—decamp, while your bones are unbroken in your skin.

Har. I shall not dispute your authority, Sir Peter.
Au revoir. [*Exit Har.*]

Sir P. *Au revoir!* the impertinent puppy. But hold, I have surely some recollection of the fellow's face. I begin to doubt if he is really of the party-coloured tribe. Gadso, as sure as fate, 'tis my new acquaintance Mr. Rupee. Yes, yes, a gallant of my wife's in disguise. I suspected him at first, with the story of the lack, and his India friend. And yet now, notwithstanding all this, I must not even hint my suspicion to my wife. O, what a miserable dog am I! [*Exit Sir Peter.*]

Enter ARABELLA, followed by MODELY.

Mod. Well, Miss Moreland, I may now be permitted to congratulate you on your approaching nuptials. My friend Belville will be the happiest man on earth.

Ara. (*with affected surprise.*) Who, Sir?

Mod. My friend Belville, Madam.

Ara. Belville! O no, poor man! If I remember right, we parted this morning, never to meet again.

Mod. How, Madam? Why I understood from Sir Peter, that every thing was settled, and that you were on the eve of being married.

Ara. Married, indeed! subjected to the humours of so strange, so undefinable a man! I too, perhaps, after sitting late at a quadrille or a whist party, to be under the necessity, the painful necessity of rising before noon, to look after my family. O Heavens! then to hear my friends say—There goes domesticated Mrs. Belville; a woman without spirit; without the least *penchant* for those elegant pleasures, by which the life of a person of fashion is rendered so superior to that of the commonalty; and to conclude, perhaps, with the piteous exclamation of, Poor lady!—O Lord, I should never endure it. Well, if ever I am married, I think it shall be to you, Mr. Modely, for you have so perfect an idea of every thing that's fashionable, that I am persuaded you would never oblige me to do that which might be disagreeable to me, and for no other reason than that you were my husband.

Mod. But as matrimony is hateful to you, Madam, why marry at all?

Ara. O fye, Mr. Modely—because I have no objection to the name of wife, provided I can be exempt from the duties. What I said, was merely in reference to your friend. O, my dear Sir, one may do many things when married, (that is, if one's husband is good-natured,) which, when single, might have attracted the attention of the world, and furnished talk for the tea-tables. Many, many are the privileges of a married woman.

Mod. May I request of you, Madam, to name a few of those privileges?

Ara. Lord, Mr. Modely, is it possible you can be ignorant of them? Why such as losing a thousand or two at play, which debt my kind husband readily discharges,

lest I should be obliged to compound for it in a manner which possibly might be disagreeable to him. (*Drawling.*) Staying out all night at a ball or masquerade, while my dearie sits at home in expectation of my return, counting the minutes, which to him seem hours, though to me they are but moments—with a thousand other trifles, which, whenever I marry, shall positively be stipulated in the marriage articles, that there may be no cause of contention between my love and me; for when one is married, one would willingly live happily, you know.

Mod. And yet, Madam, there are many ladies, to whom your plan of life would not afford any great prospect of happiness.

Ara. That must arise from their want of knowledge of the world; ~~and~~ a want of knowledge of the world must arise from a want of taste; and a want of taste betrays a want of good breeding; and a want of good breeding renders one unfit for company; and if one's unfit for company, Lord! one's a strange creature indeed.

Enter BELVILLE.

Belv. May I be allowed a word or two with you, Madam? I fear I interrupt you—(*seeing Modely.*)

Ara. You do, indeed, Sir. Mr. Modely and I had just entered into the most interesting conversation; hadn't we, Modely?

Mod. Pardon me, Madam, Mr. Belville may have something particular. I will take a turn or two, and be with you again presently. [*Exit Modely.*]

Ara. Well, Sir, what is this important business? I pray you, be quick.

Belv. Why so much in haste, Madam? My business is rather of a serious nature, and demands your attention.

Ara. Serious! O Heavens! I am not in a serious mood to-day, Sir. On the contrary, I am particularly *énjouée*, and cannot possibly give ear to your dull lec-

tures of morality. But I can guess your errand, some umbrage which you have taken at my conduct—is it not so? And thou, like a worthy lover, art come to demand atonement for my crime, with a promise not to be guilty of the like in future (*smiling*).

Belv. Arabella! Is it Arabella speaks? the Arabella I was wont to visit—she who hath oft with syren tongue declared, “that I alone was worthy of her love; that I alone had place in her affections.” Fool that I was to be deluded thus!

Ara. Well, that is really extremely pretty, and very tragical. But pray don't kill yourself, Sir, for I certainly shall not follow the example.

Belv. O, fear not that, Madam. It would be the height of folly in any man to kill himself for love of an ungrateful woman.

Ara. But what is all this stuff? I thought I was never to see your face again.

Belv. You may, perhaps, imagine, Madam, I am so fast bound in your chains, that they are not to be broken. But now, Madam, I take my leave for ever.

Ara. O, that you have done a hundred times——

Belv. And when I return——

Ara. It will be in the usual supplicating manner.

Belv. That, Madam, time must evince (*going*).

Re-enter MODELY.

Mod. Why, George, heyday! what's the matter now? another quarrel! come, come, I hate to see lovers disagree——

Ara. Lovers! are we not a devoted pair, Mr. Modely? Don't you think we shall be called the Constant Couple, by way of distinction?

Belv. 'Sdeath, was there ever—I cannot bear it.

Mod. By heaven you shall not go (*laying hold of him*).

Belv. Quit me, Sir.

Mod. No, no, I will see peace before either of you depart.

Belv. Peace! I never shall know peace again.

Ara. Do pray, Mr. Modely, let the gentleman go; he looks very wild, and may, perhaps, do you a mischief.

Belv. Must I endure this insult, patiently endure it!

Ara. Mr. Modely, will you favour me with your arm? Bye, Belville. [*Exeunt; Arab. leaning on Modely.*]

Belv. Torture, torture, sure I shall go mad!

[*Exit on the other side.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Enter SIR PETER POSITIVE, OLD HARCOURT, and MELISSA.

(*Old Harcourt dressed in a plain suit as at first.*)

Sir P. And you really admire a soldier, Melissa?

Mel. O yes, Sir, extravagantly. The man of my choice must positively sport a feather in his cap.

Sir P. Then there is hope, I presume, for Captain Harcourt. (*Aside to Old Harcourt.*) You will certainly carry her.

Mel. Captain Harcourt, Sir!

Sir P. Yes, Madam, Captain Harcourt. It is my will and pleasure that you should immediately marry the Captain.

Mel. The Captain—Captain Harcourt, Sir! You surprise me. Give me leave to ask you, Sir, is it your wish too? (*to Old H.*)

Old H. Most earnestly I wish it, Madam.

Mel. (*aside.*) So, so—he has heard of his son's return, and begins to see his own folly. This is fortunate indeed.

Old H. I had formerly the weakness, the presumption (call it what you will, Madam,) of requesting your

hand for Mr. Harcourt,—I have now the supreme satisfaction of soliciting it for Captain Harcourt, himself.

Mel. Sir, I really know not how to answer you, but if—

Sir P. Nay, nay, Melissa, never hesitate—never blush to own a virtuous passion. Had I a son or brother possessed of the Captain's merit, I should be infinitely proud of him.

Mel. And with infinite reason, Sir.

Old H. You are infinitely too good, Madam.

Sir P. Bravo, Melissa, I admire your frankness, and will reward it accordingly.

Mel. Why then, Sir, at once to throw off all reserve, I here declare to you, that I am perfectly sensible of Captain Harcourt's merit, and that I would prefer him to any man on earth. (*Old H. bows.*)

Old H. Madam, you, you, I, I—(*aside.*) What a lucky dog am I!

Mel. Nay more (and be witness to it, my dear guardian), I think myself greatly honoured by his choice.

Old H. You quite confound me, Madam.—(*Aside.*) What a wonderful change!

Mel. Upon my life, I am sincere.

Old H. So you were, I presume, when you rejected Mr. Harcourt? (*smiling.*)

Mel. Never more so, I assure you, (*likewise smiling.*)

Old H. Well, well, Mr. Harcourt pardons it—freely pardons it, for the Captain's sake. Ha! ha! ha!

Mel. Your good humour enchants me, Sir; and I am truly happy in finding that we at length so perfectly understand each other.

Sir P. Why this is as it should be: for to confess the truth, I was plaguily afraid that the Captain would be as coldly received as the Squire.

Mel. My dear Sir Peter, how could you possibly suppose it? You must know but little of our sex to imagine such a thing.

Old H. Right, Madam, right. I now humbly take

my leave ; and hope when I have next the honour of waiting on you to find your sentiments the same.

Mel. While Captain Harcourt's remain unaltered, mine can never change. [*Exeunt Old H. and Melissa severally. Old H. bowing profoundly.*]

Sir P. This girl is a terrible plague to me. I would she were fairly wedded to the Captain. I suspect too, violently suspect, that my lady plays me false. Well, my servants are all from home : now should I be fortunate enough to pick up some intelligence—Ha ! somebody coming—(*goes into the house*).

Enter ROBERT.

(*Knock.*)

(*Sir Peter comes from the house.*)

Rob. Is my Lady at home, pray ?

Sir P. Softly, softly—don't speak so loud—if Sir Peter should hear you, there would be the devil to pay.

Rob. So I believe, indeed. I have heard of him.

Sir P. You have—well, and what do people say ?

Rob. O, ho ! what you're for pumping, eh brother ?

Sir P. (*aside.*) Brother ! No, no, not I. Pumping ! I scorn it.

Rob. Then, if I should tell you all I know, will you here promise me that Sir Peter shall never be the wiser ?

Sir P. No wiser than you choose to make him, I promise you.

Rob. Well then, Sir Peter is your master to be sure, yet that he is a contemptible silly fellow you will readily allow. (*Sir Peter stares.*) Come, come, I know you think so, though you won't own it.

Sir P. A contemptible silly fellow ?—no, no, I can't think that, no, no.

Rob. What, you are his friend then ? I must be cautious, it seems.

Sir P. His friend ! no, no, brother. (*Aside.*) I must humour the rascal. No, no, I never was his friend.

Rob. Well then, my master, Mr. Lovemore, who is a very devil among the women—By the way, my Lady Positive is a good deal younger than Sir Peter,—you know that, I suppose?

Sir P. Yes, yes, I know that. Go on, go on—Plagues and tortures!

Rob. Then thus it is—My master called me to him the other morning—Robert, says he—I am his Plenipo in love affairs: you know what a Plenipo is?

Sir P. Yes, yes—go on, I say, go on.

Rob. Robert, says he—it is proper to inform you though, that I am a consummate judge in beauty; and that on these occasions Mr. Lovemore always insists on my opinion—Robert, says he—what do you think of Lady—he is one of the freest, good-natured—st—not a particle of pride in his composition.

Sir P. Fire and fury! Lady who? why don't you proceed with your story?

Rob. Lady who? Why Lady Positive, to be sure: who the devil should it be? But you seem cursedly impatient in the matter, my honest fellow.

Sir P. (*aside.*) Honest fellow! The puppy—as consummate a judge in honesty, I warrant, as he is in beauty.

Rob. You seem so very eager, I say, that egad I begin to be fearful—pray are you any way interested? I hope you do not mean to betray me.

Sir P. Betray you, indeed!—But curiosity, you know, in a serving man—

Rob. True, true, or you would be unworthy of the honours of the cloth. But I was telling you of my discriminative powers as to the charms of the sex: *apropos*, my master, by reason of these my powers, calls me, in his familiar moments, Paris; swears that no one is better qualified to dispose of the golden apple inscribed "To the fairest," than myself, and entrusts me with it accordingly. To prove to you, however, that I am not a boaster in this particular, and that I can determine on

symmetry of limb as well as on excellence of feature, I will show you my critique on the Venus de Medicis. It has been highly commended, I assure you. I have it now in my pocket—for you must know, that when I and Mr. Lovemore were in Italy—(*during this speech Sir Peter shows great uneasiness*).

Sir P. (*interrupting him.*) Hell and the devil! will you never have done with these interlardings? Will you never relieve me from my anxiety?

Rob. Your anxiety, brother? ah, I wish we could call you comrade. I would you were declared of our house. But you are all agog for the sequel—so at once to proceed—“Robert,” says he, “what do you think of Lady Positive?” “Please your honour, I think her a very fine woman.” “Well, then,” says he, “I wish to prove myself her friend.”

Sir P. Her friend!

Rob. Yes, yes, I took him at once, and engaged in the business.

Sir P. You did!

Rob. I did. Why you would do the same, wouldn't you?

Sir P. Certainly, certainly. (*Aside.*) Confusion!

Rob. “You must know”—continues he with his usual drollery, “that the blockhead, her husband, imagines me in love with his niece, when the truth is, I am doing him a much greater honour by being in love with his wife.”

Sir P. “A much greater honour by being in love with his wife.” Devilish droll, 'faith, ha! ha! (*forcing a laugh.*)

• *Rob.* Aye, aye, I knew you'd be pleased with it—I knew it would make you laugh.

Sir P. O, exceedingly, exceedingly—never better pleased—never more diverted in my life. A comical dog, this master of your's: a mighty pleasant fellow.

Rob. True; and then, that ninny, Sir Peter. You'll agree with me now, I suppose, that he's a confounded silly chap?

Sir P. Agree with you! O, entirely. I am a cursed silly—he is, as you say, a cursed silly chap—Damnation!

Rob. You don't seem to enjoy it half so much as I do though.

Sir P. Not enjoy it, d'ye say?—I think I laugh enough for one in my situation.

Rob. Situation! O, what are you of opinion, then, that from your situation of servant, you are not at any time to be jocular—that you are not to ridicule your employer?

Sir P. You are right. I am clearly of that opinion.

Rob. Ha! ha! ha! But you are fresh from the country, I suppose. Provincial moderation, eh, my boy?

Sir P. You have hit it, my boy. (*Aside.*) The scoundrel!

Rob. Well, well, but you must have done with these nonsensical notions now you are a London smart. Every footman in London makes a mockery of his master.

Sir P. The devil he does!

Rob. Yes, yes, what did you never hear of that? Oh, you must lay aside your bashfulness, your *mauvaise honte*, it will not do here. Beside, should you lose your present place, how the plague can you expect, with that sheepish look, to be able to get another?

Sir P. Sheepish look—the rascal!

Rob. But to business. May I be permitted to see my Lady, for I had particular orders to deliver this letter into her own hand?

Sir P. A letter! give it to me, my dear friend. Here, here's something for your mistake, something in return for the favour.

Rob. Heyday! why you're devilish generous. You have got a plaguy long purse there, brother.

Sir P. (*aside.*) Gadso! I had nearly forgot my character. Why, you must know, brother, that I—I—am a sort of a favourite with my lady; and so—and so—she furnishes me with money, in order to reward those who may do her any particular service.

Rob. O, ho! That's very well judged, indeed. You expect half, I suppose?

Sir P. No, no. Keep it all, keep it all.

Rob. The prince of footmen, by my soul!

Sir P. Greatly obliged to you for the compliment, indeed, brother.

Rob. Well, well, I must begone. But mark me, my boy, if I should be chosen of the Dilletanti, you must not appear astonished at it; you must not affect the smallest surprise.

Sir P. Dilletanti! what's that?

Rob. What's that! Heyday, my honest fellow, why, where the plague have you lived all the days of your life? What's that! Why, a society for the formation and establishment of taste throughout the kingdom. O! it is by taste, and taste alone, that we can make a figure in the world,—that sets us above the *canaille*. There is scarcely a footman in England who is not up to it, however high; nay, there are many who possess that admirable quality in a degree even superior to that of the people they serve. So don't be surprised, I say, if in a little time you should find me not only received as *un uomo di gusto raffinato*, but in the chair. But I must bid you farewell. You'll take care of the letter?

Sir P. Particular care, I promise you.

[*Goes into the house.*]

Rob. (*alone.*) What's that? Ah, the *cionno*! the *sempliciotto*! Damme, if I wouldn't have him black-balled, should he only aspire to be president of a debating club. The blockhead may aid us in our purposes, however. The letter is safe with him, and will finish my master's business, or the devil's in it. Ay, ay! I have executed my commission *à merveille*, as the French say; and now I think we shall do. And then, almost all that I have said my own invention—taken up from only a hint—merely an effusion of fancy. Ah, I'm a clever fellow, that's indisputable.

Enter Lucy from the house.

Lucy. Well, Mr. Robert, what weighty business have you with Sir Peter?

Rob. My business is weighty, I confess; but it is rather with Sir Peter's wife.

Lucy. His wife! Why, I have seen you for some time past in conversation with the knight. He gave you money, too.

Rob. The knight! Sir Peter! Who — when — where?

Lucy. Why, that was Sir Peter who just now left you.

Rob. The devil it was!

Lucy. What, had you no recollection of his face? you have seen him before?

Rob. Never. I took him for a servant out of livery.

Lucy. That you might very well do, from his appearance, indeed.

Rob. He even humoured the mistake.

Lucy. Ay, ay! Jealousy would prompt him to that.

Rob. Here's a piece of business. Do, my dear Lucy, follow him instantly. Recover, if possible, the letter I gave him, and deliver it to your lady.

Lucy. I will, I will—

Rob. Search in all his pockets—break open his cabinet—do any thing, in short. Unlucky, unlucky! I shall never have the management of an intrigue again as long as I live. O, the devil, the devil! my good name will be utterly lost.

Lucy. (aside.) His good name! What a coxcomb it is.
[*Exeunt severally.*]

Re-enter SIR PETER.

Sir P. Any more of Cupid's emissaries prying about my house? No. Well, I have got the letter, but what to do with it I know not. If I might venture to open it now,—ay, that were well. I fear I dare not; and yet my lady opens all my letters. Egad, I've a good mind—by

your leave, wax (*opens it*). Ha! an inclosure for Arabella. If Lady Positive should be innocent, now. Yet this may be all a trick. Ay, ay! they lend each other their names; it must be so. Well, I will conceal my suspicions; at least for the present. But what an impudent fellow this Lovemore must be! It is scarcely an hour ago that he made me a proposal (supposing Belville to be actually discarded) for marrying my niece. Thus does he think, by a pretended love for Arabella, to cover his designs on my wife. But I'll counter-work him, I warrant.

[*Enter LADY POSITIVE.*]

So, Lady Positive, what is your opinion of the modest gentleman, Mr. Lovemore? What say you to his thus pestering us with his visits?

Lady P. Pestering, indeed! I think we cannot have too much of his company. He is one of the most agreeable men I ever knew.

Sir P. There! there! I thought as much—"The blockhead her husband imagines me in love with his niece, when the truth is,"—Zounds! I have no patience—I'll challenge, I'll fight him to-morrow morning.

Lady P. Bless me! what has occasioned all this fury—this burst of passion?

Sir P. What generally does occasion a burst of passion—a woman.

Lady P. You are ever discontented—eternally unhappy.

Sir P. Unhappy! What! because I will not tamely suffer myself to be dishonoured—

Lady P. Is this proper language, and to a woman like me? Are you not indebted for much of your consequence entirely to my family? Wasn't it through my brother's interest that you became mayor of our town? and didn't I bring you forty thousand pounds? Have you forgot all this, you monster?

Sir P. Monster! 'Slife, madam! and didn't I, in

return for all this, make you a lady, and my wife?—my wife, Madam; have you forgot that, madam?

Lady P. Indeed, I have not; and, however desirous I may be of forgetting it, you seem determined I never shall. But I must tell you, Sir Peter, that these inuendoes, these glances at my reputation, are monstrous, and I will not bear them.

Sir P. And I must tell you, my lady—But I'll fight him to-morrow morning.

Lady P. Fight him, truly! You'll certainly have a return of your ague-fit; you will, indeed, Sir Peter.

Sir P. Aye, aye, Madam, you may sneer and laugh; but satisfaction is the word, and satisfaction I will have.

Lady P. You'll make yourself very 'ridiculous, my love, depend upon it you will;—but one might as well attempt to turn the course of a river, as to think of diverting you from your whimsies and extravagancies.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter MODELY and BELVILLE, meeting WITLING.

Mod. Ned! why, you look pleased. What new adventure?

Wit. Nay, 'faith, nothing very new. Another female, egad, tumbled into my arms, like a charmed bird into the mouth of a rattlesnake. I am certainly one of the luckiest dogs,—here's that did the business, I believe—the women are devilish fond of being noticed by us poets—read, read, (*giving a paper to Belville.*) Italian is all the fashion; I have therefore inscribed it, "*A quella ch'io adoro,*"—that is, "*To her whom I adore.*"

Belv. (aside, and reading.) "O, Arabella, loveliest of thy sex!" &c. 'Sdeath, what stuff! But Arabella—if this should be!—Impossible!—Pray, Sir, may I ask the name of the lady whom you have thus honoured?

Wit. Moreland, Sir—Arabella Moreland. Hide nothing of the kind from my friends—always proud of my amours, I assure you. O, that Arabella—

"Grace is in all her steps, heaven in her eye;
In every action dignity and love."

Belv. Distraction! that this coxcomb—But I will conceal my uneasiness. He must not openly triumph over me, however.

Wit. Are you acquainted with the lady, Sir?

Belv. I have seen her.

Wit. Isn't she a charming creature?

Belv. Very charming.

Wit. And don't you think I'm a devilish fortunate fellow?

Belv. (*uneasily.*) Yes, devilish fortunate.

Wit. From your manner of answering, Sir, I fancy you do not know my little Venus, after all.

Belv. Pardon me, Sir, I think I do know her—completely know her.

Wit. But you don't seem to partake of my happiness, gentlemen. This is unfriendly.

Belv. You speak with great confidence, Sir—pray are you so sure of the lady?

Wit. Sure! 'Gad, I don't know what you call sure. Why, 'faith, I cannot say that I have had her—

Belv. Sir!—

Wit. Her, her—her promise. I cannot say that I have actually—But as to the sure, 'fore George, a man's sure of nothing for that matter. For instance now, I have a bumper of claret in my hand, and am about to toast my mistress Arabella—why I cannot scientifically prove to you that I shall drink it; and yet, I think, the odds are pretty clearly in my favour.

Mod. So then you modestly infer, that you are as sure of obtaining Miss Moreland, as of drinking your claret?

• *Wit.* Undoubtedly: but I see you envy me—However, to show I'm not afraid of you, what say you to a visit to my mistress? I'll introduce you; 'fore gad, she may like you better than me, perhaps. *De tout mon cœur.* I shall not be *au désespoir*, I believe. But mark me, gentlemen; I must positively have your promise of secrecy, at least for a time—Damn it, I hate your prattling, coxcomby,—Why there's—what the devil's his

name? He that is eternally boasting and bragging—You know who I mean—dull as a comical fellow—O, Voluble, Jack Voluble, that's the man. He now lost a first-rate beauty a little time ago, from an utter inability to keep his own secret—ha! ha! ha! And how d'ye think he effected this notable business—ha! ha! ha! I shall die with laughing. Why, 'gad, by making a confident of the real lover. By all that's ridiculous, he did; ha! ha! ha!

Belv. (aside.) I cannot refrain from smiling at the puppy, notwithstanding my situation.

Mod. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Witling, you will meet with a rival at Arabella's.

Wit. Yes, yes, so I have heard. I don't know his name, but I am told he is a cursed, silly, jealous-pated fellow. There's no danger from him; d'ye think there is, Belville?

Belv. More than you imagine, I believe.

Wit. O, what you know him, then? Come, give us his character—But no matter, no matter; I shall be acquainted with him soon enough.

Mod. Aye, aye; but what if you were to find another, a more powerful rival at Arabella's, eh, Ned? what would you say to that? (*Aside and musing.*) Belville's success is problematical—her beauty and fortune great—She has certainly some little *penchant* towards me—Well, time—

Wit. Powerful! ha! ha! ha! Yes, I have heard of him too; though I am equally ignorant of the block-head's name—I say, a blockhead, in opposing me. Set that aside, indeed, and he may, for aught I know, be nearly as witty as you or myself—Powerful! Ridiculous. I believe I shall presently silence him. (*Modely appears disconcerted.*) But understand me: this I advance in a firm persuasion of the lady's sincerity. At present, I am honoured by her partiality: should she be induced to change her mind, I must e'en take up with Melissa, Sir Peter's agreeable ward.

Mod. A very accommodating spirit, indeed. .

Wit. But harkee, Belville; you may tell this friend of your's, that if he again presume to approach the palace of my goddess, he will meet with a reception that may make him repent of his temerity. (*Aside.*) There can be no sort of harm in vaunting a little. I am acquainted with some, too, who are easily frightened. Or there is a chance that he may be equally humane with myself; yes, like me, he may shudder at the thought of killing a man. In that case, all will be well.

Belv. "Repent his temerity"—poo, poo, you know not what you say. (*Walks hastily about.*)

Wit. Good, good, may I perish!—But why—what the plague, you seem uneasy? I, too, am vexed—desperately vexed, that this rival of mine should be your friend; but I cannot possibly give up my prize. Had he even been my own, actually the man of my heart, I must have sacrificed him on the altar of love.

Belv. Well, Sir, I can venture to tell you—and in the name of my friend too—that your assiduities with Arabella will be of short duration; and further, I may prophesy of her, that she will be no more inclined to listen to you, than she would to myself.

Wit. Yourself? Very likely. 'Gad, I know nothing about that. But, not inclined to listen to me!—Admirable! The woman who has accepted my verses in her praise; the woman who has frankly admitted my visits—Prithee speak to be understood. By Venus, Cupid, and all the little loves, I conjure you to it; for curse catch me if I comprehend you in the least.

Mod. And never will. He is utterly incomprehensible, Mr. Witling. Obscure as a German expounder, or an *illuminé*. But come, we had better leave him to his reveries, and join our more agreeable and companionable set.

Wit. Well, adieu! Belville. I'll introduce you soon

to my mistress: I will by the Lord Harry. It may put him into somewhat better humour, eh, Modely?—a good honest fellow, after all. [*Exeunt Wit. and Mod.*]

Belv. So, they are gone. Now what am I to think of this? Can she, in truth, be such a very jilt? I hope not. Be this, however, as it may, her coquetry and affectation are truly ridiculous. She charges me, indeed, with being of a jealous, fretful disposition. Fretful! jealous! I who never—O, woman, woman—I really begin to wish—on what shall I resolve? I know not. But I will go immediately to her uncle, and advise with him on the matter. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

ARABELLA, BELINDA, and BELMOUR *discovered.*

Ara. I wonder where that fool Treble is! He promised me a new song this morning. I am afraid he has forgot it.

Bel. You are always impatient, Arabella. It is but just his hour of coming.

Ara. Impatient, my dear sister: why it is a minute and a quarter beyond the time—O, if he is not more punctual I shall certainly have done with him.

BELVILLE *shown in by Servant.*

Belv. Pardon me, Madam—I understood that Sir Peter was here (*to Belinda*).

Bel. We expect him presently, Sir. (*Belv. is going out.*) You must not leave us, Mr. Belville. We shall want your opinion of a new song that Mr.—

Belv. A song, my opinion of a song! I thank you, Madam, but I have business.

Bel. You shall positively stay. The words are Belmour's; and Mr. Treble informs me that the music is admirable.

Ara. Belmour's! Then I condemn it unheard.

Belm. That's hard,—when you too are the subject of it.

Ara. Am I the subject? O, then 'tis filled with Cupids, flames, and darts, I suppose.

Belm. 'Faith, Madam, it is not.

Ara. That's strange!—Belville, are you there—how d'ye do?

Belv. Light, capricious woman!—

Belm. Do you go to the Opera this evening, Miss Moreland?

Ara. I fancy not. Apropos, Mr. Belmour,—did you ever hear the name of that saucy fellow who was so very particular to me at the Masquerade the other night?

Belm. Never, Madam.

Belv. Was he rude to you, Arabella?

Ara. "Rude to you, Arabella," (*minicking*)—Lord, what a comical question. But why do you ask it?

Belv. I thought you styled him saucy, Madam.

Bel. O, a figure, a figure, Mr. Belville. By a saucy fellow, you are to understand a very agreeable gentleman.

Ara. And he was most enchantingly so,—said a thousand handsome things, and made love to me the whole evening. But I shall never see him again.

Belv. O, do not despair, Madam. Or suppose you were to advertise for him? 'Tis no unusual method, I assure you. Formerly, indeed, it might be thought somewhat indelicate; but now, O, 'tis nothing now. Many a lady, whose hopes had nearly forsaken her, has been indebted to it for a husband.

Ara. You, Sir, are indeed, and without a figure, saucy.

Belv. Then there is the greater chance that I may be honoured with your notice.

Enter Servant, shewing in TREBLE.

Ara. O, Mr. Treble, I have been dying till you came. The song, the song.

Song by Treble.

Clorinda still rejects my hand,
 Yet strives to keep my heart ;—
 Bids me begone at her command—
 But sighs when I depart.

What should I do, her faith to prove,
 In this uncertain state ?
 Who tells me with her eyes—" I love ;"
 But with her tongue—" I hate."

" Do !" answers Chloë, " foolish youth,
 She'll yield when next you meet ;
 Know, women's looks alone speak truth—
 Their words are all deceit."

Belm. Well, Madam, what reward will you bestow on the poet ?

Ara. The poet's a coxcomb. The words are ridiculous—most impertinently familiar. I knew I shouldn't like it. But I must go ; I have ten thousand visits to pay this morning.

Belv. May I have the honour of attending you, Madam ?

Ara. O, you hideous creature ! how could you think of such a thing ? Beside, you have business, you know. Come, Belinda—Belmour, will you go ? *[Exeunt.]*

Manet BELVILLE—enter SIR PETER.

Sir P. Prithee, what's the matter, George ? Why, you look remarkably grave. One would have thought that the expectation of seeing Arabella again would have banished all sorrow.

Belv. Alas ! Sir, it is the having seen her that occasions it.

Sir P. What ! have you lately seen my niece ?

Belv. Not a minute ago, Sir. On my return to England I immediately came hither, and paid my respects to Arabella ; but even then her reception of me was not a little extraordinary.

Sir P. What! she did not run into your arms, as you imagined she would have done? You surely forgot, George, that there is a certain decorum to be observed among women;—most of them maintain it before marriage, however ready they may be to break it after.

Belv. You are much mistaken, Sir Peter. I am well acquainted with that decorum; than which, in woman, there can be nothing more amiable.

Sir P. 'Sdeath! Sir, of what then do you complain?

Belv. Of your niece's inexplicable conduct, Sir. There is something so extremely mortifying in her treatment of me, that—

Sir P. Poo! poo! she is a girl of spirit, and treats you with a freedom, which, if you were to retaliate, all would be well: instead of which, you act the sighing and desponding lover; believe every thing she says to be spoken in earnest; and, in consequence of that belief, you are continually quarrelling.

Belv. Perhaps so, Sir; but Belmour—

Sir P. Belmour! Psha! psha! you're wrong, I tell you—quite wrong.

Belv. I rather conceive that it is you who are in the wrong, Sir Peter.

Sir P. Zounds! Sir, what d'ye mean? I in the wrong!—Sir, I never am in the wrong, never was in the wrong, and never shall be in the wrong. What d'ye say to that, Sir?

Belv. Why, really, Sir, I know not what to say to it.

Sir P. What! you are sneering, Sir. But you know my meekness—you know my moderation, and take advantage of it to insult me.

Belv. My dear Sir Peter, how can you think—Do have a little patience.

Sir P. Patience! He's preaching patience to me—I who am notorious for it—a very Grissel! Zounds! Sir, Grissel herself had never half my patience. Well, but let me hear; what have you to advance against Belmour?

Belv. Why, then, I think I can convince you, Sir Peter, that his love of Belinda is but pretended, and concerted merely to cover his designs on Arabella.

Sir P. Your proofs, your proofs—

Belv. Why, Sir, according to all appearances—

Sir P. Appearances! Ridiculous! If he really loves her, why not make it known, and solicit my consent?

Belv. That, Sir, honour has as yet forbid. After having made offers to your eldest niece, how can he solicit you for leave to marry the youngest?

Sir P. The affair is rather nice, indeed; but it frequently happens, and if rightly managed—

Belv. Perhaps, Sir Peter, you may be inclined to listen to such a proposal.

Sir P. There again. Hell and the devil! Sir, do you think I drive a Smithfield bargain? Do you think—

Belv. No, no, Sir Peter, I don't think—I won't think at all about it.—(*Aside*) An obstinate old blockhead!

Sir P. Eh! What?

Belv. I say—I say, Sir, that I am so fully convinced of your good intentions towards me, that—that—in short, I submit every thing entirely to your management.

Sir P. Mighty condescending, truly! A little while ago I was in the wrong—quite wrong—knew nothing; a cursed stupid fellow, I suppose. But here comes Lovemore; and I have business. So, your servant.

[*Exit Sir Peter.*]

Enter LOVEMORE.

Belville! I rejoice to see you. I have now, thank heaven, an opportunity to unbosom; and I flatter myself that the news I bring will not be unacceptable. Know, then, that touched at your situation, and desirous—be witness for me, powers! how sincerely so—of becoming acquainted with the real sentiments of Arabella, I feigned a passion for her; and with such warmth I

urged my suit, that, unable otherwise to crush my seeming hopes, she candidly confessed she loved you.

Belv. A friendly device, indeed. But was she not astonished at your making such a declaration?

Love. Beyond description. But it was that alone which forced the secret from her breast.

Belv. And yet, Lovemore, her passion, if it may so be termed, is the most unaccountable one in nature. In a word, nothing can be more opposite than her behaviour of one hour compared with another.

Love. Notwithstanding which she loves you, and that sincerely, take my word for it. Her emotion was to me a convincing proof; nay more, she strenuously recommended secrecy to me.

Belv. Secrecy! A pretty proof of her affection! Wherefore should it be kept secret? When she knows I love, or rather did love, to such excess, that a return of it must have given me the greatest happiness; knowing this, I say, she entertains an affection for me, and keeps it secret. Ridiculous! No, no; this is too plain—'Sdeath! I shall be ever branded for a fool.

Love. Possibly she may have reasons for keeping it secret.

Belv. Reasons for rendering a man miserable! Not unlikely, Sir; every woman will give you a hundred. Fool! fool! fool!

Love. Have patience, George, and I shall hope to convince you—

Belv. Of what, Sir? That I am the most unhappy of men! I know it. That I shall ever be otherwise is impossible. O Lovemore! Lovemore! here it lies—*(strikes his breast,)*—'tis rooted here, and never can be eradicated. What is rooted here? Love? No, no; 'tis hatred. Hatred of whom? No matter; love dwells no longer here,—no, no; now I am free. Come hither, Lovemore; is not joy pictured in my countenance? *(forcing a smile.)* Did I ever appear so perfectly happy? Ha! ha! ha! How weak must that man be, who would

suffer a woman to give him a moment's uneasiness! Thank heaven! I have shaken off the yoke, and laugh at my former folly.

Love. Deem it not folly, Belville. But here comes Arabella; retire a while, and listen to our conversation.

Belv. No, no; I have so repeatedly experienced—

Love. Indulge me so far; it will, in all probability, be—

Belv. I am determined to break with her entirely. I am tired of this—

Love. But if she rails against you, there will be then an opportunity of coming forward and upbraiding her. Let me prevail on you. *[Belville retires.]*

Enter ARABELLA.

Love. Thanks to my kind stars! which have once more thrown me in the way of her whom I adore.

Ara. What means this language, Sir? How am I to interpret it?

Love. Ask your own heart, Madam; it will resolve all doubts.

Ara. With the sentiments of my heart you are well acquainted, Sir. But now, ask yours; and then tell me whether you do not consider it as totally repugnant to every idea of honour and honesty, thus to prefer your suit after the conversation which lately passed between us?

Love. There is no resisting one's destiny, Madam. I am impelled by passions which reason would in vain surmount. Perhaps I am in the wrong; but if I cease to be so, I must of consequence remain unhappy.

Ara. Away! Thou monster of ingratitude! O, that Belville were but here, to assert and vindicate my wrongs.

Belv. (comes forward.) As you have wished, behold him here!

Ara. (aside.) Ha! This is unfortunate. Now will he affect a triumph which I cannot bear.

Belv. It gives me infinite happiness, Madam, to find

that in a time of supposed danger you were desirous that I should become your defender.

Ara. Supposed danger! And are you still blind to the criminal proceedings of this man; will you not give credit to the conviction of your own senses?

Belv. This gentleman, Madam, has ever been my friend; therefore entertain no doubts, nor utter any thing derogatory to his honour. It was with my concurrence that he addressed you; and as he has been the happy instrument of effecting our reconciliation, let him be a witness of our mutual vows.

Ara. Agreed. But they shall be vows of everlasting hatred. Egregious!—With your concurrence that he paid his addresses! But I am acquainted with the motive; thou art Suspicion's self. Know, Sir, that when I mentioned your name, I was desirous of having some person to rescue me from the impertinent pretensions of this man; and know not why I preferred your name to that of any other. But persevere in your friendship—cherish this serpent in your bosom; and when his sting shall have attained a keener point, it may, perhaps, awake you from this lethargic state, and convince you of your credulity. *[Exit Ara.]*

Belv. I am all amazement!

Love. This behaviour is extravagant, indeed! And yet your being foremost in her thought, carries with it an appearance of your being foremost in her affections. The attack was sudden, and could not be repelled by any other means. Her pride was hurt; and considering me as an assistant in her defeat, she was desirous of taking revenge, by endeavouring to lessen me in the good opinion of my friend.

Belv. But it is impossible. No, no, in that particular, the caprice of a woman shall never sway with me.

Love. I am sensible of your kindness—your true friendship, rather; and will endeavour to deserve it.

Belv. You have ever deserved, my dear Lovemore, much more than it is in my power to bestow. But I am

under the necessity of leaving you. My spirits are so greatly agitated that I am unfit for every thing.

[*Exit Belm.*]

Love. Good heaven! how culpable am I in having ever wronged that man. But I will, if it be possible, expiate my crime, by making both him and Arabella happy, in despite of themselves (*Going.*)

Enter BELMOUR and WITLING.

Belm. Ha! yonder's Lovemore. Come, Witling, relate the particulars of this adventure—

Wit. Poh, poh, I haven't leisure, I—

Belm. No excuse, no excuse. Modely swears 'tis true. We must have it; and Lovemore shall decide upon it.

Love. That I will; you may trust me safely. What is it, Witling?

Wit. O, the most ridiculous affair in nature. Why you must know that some little time ago I accidentally became acquainted with a lady—a charming woman, by my soul!—of an amorous complexion, which I soon perceived, and after saying a few civil things to her, swearing she was an angel, and so forth, made love to her in form. She kept me in suspense (as most women do, you know,) and then informed me she was married; that her husband was in the country on some urgent affairs, and likely to remain there for a considerable time (a very convenient hint). Now I had not the least idea of her being married, for though she was styled Mrs., I always supposed her to be a widow, and as she had an elegant house and equipage, concluded her a rich one; which, after having made sure of her affections, I was determined to inquire into, that I might be on or off, according to my inclination.

Belm. Well, but the husband—he was no obstacle, I suppose?

Wit. Eye, fye! what, wound the honour of my friend?

Belm. Very honourable, 'faith, as well as in regard to the lady, whose affections you wished to secure. But friend, say you—why, you never saw the man?

Wit. True. Yet I design to make him my friend. But you shall hear—I presently discovered that I was by no means disagreeable to her—(you have often told me I am irresistible), yet having an unconquerable aversion to duels and law-suits, I withstood the temptation. Pray did I ever tell you of the awkward scrape I got into upon much such another business?

Love. Never. Pray communicate: we may profit by your experience.

Wit. Why 'tis but a few years ago, that—having boasted of the favours of a certain female, a superb, fine creature, I assure you—a bloody-minded fellow, who affected a regard for her, and all that, called me to account for it, when I vow to gad it was said only in a frolic, and merely to get into the good graces of the ladies.

Love. Very hard, i'faith.

Wit. Hard indeed, and for a little innocent raillery. But he swore that a lady's name was not to be sported with, insisted on my meeting him, and I was obliged to comply. No mischief, thank heaven, ensued; though there was so great danger, that I have ever since been particularly cautious not to be drawn into any similar rencontres.—But I must tell you how I design to make a friend of the husband. Instead of personally acquainting him with his wife's *penchant* for myself, I shall contrive that he hear of her from a certain quarter; he will be pleased at finding me so careful of his honour.

Belm. Very careful, to be sure—you, who are proclaiming the story in every part of the town.

Wit. Psha, psha! I have told it only to you, and a few more friends, whose secrecy I can depend upon. He, I say, will be pleased at finding me careful of his honour, upbraid her for her inconstancy, and ever after consider me as his dear and valuable friend,

Love. O, you mistake the case entirely. She will turn the tables on you, depend upon it. A woman scorned is a very dangerous enemy. With tears in her eyes she will protest her innocence; swear you attempted her virtue, and that having been rejected, you thus meanly sought revenge. The husband will believe her, and insist on satisfaction, which you must undoubtedly give him, or ever after be liable to insult; so that the very means which you would employ to avoid danger, will inevitably bring you into it.

Wit. 'Faith, this seems all very likely. I never thought of that. Not a word of this matter, my dear friends, if you love me. I'll run and unsay all that I have said. I thank you most sincerely. I'll about it instantly. Egad, this may turn out a very ugly affair. [*Exit hastily.*]

Belm. Well, get thee gone for an incorrigible coxcomb. There now, has he been racking his brains to invent this story, without ever considering that he might be kicked for his ingenuity. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter SIR PETER POSITIVE *and* WORMWOOD.

Worm. I fear, from your hesitation, that you think unfavourably of me, Sir Peter.

Sir P. Quite the contrary, I assure you, Mr. Wormwood. I respect you greatly, and if Belinda—but you will find a powerful rival in Mr. Belmour.

Worm. I fancy not, Sir Peter. Arabella, I believe, has superior charms for him.

Sir P. Arabella! Do you really think so? Belville has often told me this, indeed; but I considered it as merely the effect of jealousy.

Worm. There are pretty good reasons, Sir Peter—but secrets of this kind—

Sir P. Come, come, Mr. Wormwood, I plainly perceive that you know more of this business than you are willing to communicate. I must insist on your friendship, I must beg you will be explicit.

Worm. But will it be handsome, Sir Peter? will it be honest?

Sir P. How, Sir? Are you privy to any thing that may wound the honour of my family, and yet scruple to inform me of it? at the very time, too, that you are courting my alliance?

Worm. You may command me, Sir Peter; and yet it is a disagreeable task. I could wish it had fallen on some other; but since—in a word then, Belmour himself, in confidence, informed me of his love for Arabella.

Sir P. Indeed! Belinda should be apprised of this. I'll step to her instantly.

Worm. (aside.) 'Sdeath! this must never be.—Hold, hold, Sir Peter, you would ruin every thing by mentioning me: destroy my scheme entirely.

Sir P. Do you really think so?

Worm. O, without the smallest question.

Sir P. Well, well, I should be sorry for that.

Worm. Beside, Sir Peter, you are to consider that all this is done in friendship; mere friendship. You may assure Belinda of the truth of this affair, without mentioning me, you know. Were I to be named, she perhaps might not credit it; nay, even imagine it a trick of mine to divert her affections from Belmour to myself. Women have strange fancies, strange ideas in matters of love. No, no, a little time will show him in his proper colours.

Sir P. Right, very right, Mr. Wormwood.

Worm. You may likewise inform Belville, that you have no longer any doubt of the truth of what he told you, respecting Belmour. He will think it kind. It will induce him, too, when he finds his suspicions verified, to take his measures accordingly. He is my friend; I would willingly serve him. In the mean time, my attention and assiduity may possibly be the means of recommending me to Belinda.

Sir P. Admirable! very well judged, indeed, Mr.

Wormwood; but give me leave to ask, what do you think of Modely?

Worm. Think of him, Sir Peter?

Sir P. Yes, think of him, Sir. It has been hinted to me, that he too, notwithstanding his friendship for Belville, has thoughts of Arabella.

Worm. Malice, absolute malice. Modely dishonest! you might as soon suspect me.

Sir P. Indeed I think so. This is a slanderous age, Mr. Wormwood. Shocking! that the good and virtuous should be the most liable to aspersion.

Worm. Terrible! But you remember our immortal bard:

——— "Back-wounding calumny
The whitest virtue strikes."

Sir P. Aye, aye, but you have heard, I suppose, of the ten thousand pounds that I have promised to each of my nieces on the day of marriage.

Worm. I have, Sir; but you must not imagine that it has any weight with me.

Sir P. O, none at all, I dare say.

Worm. Not the least, believe me, Sir Peter.

Sir P. And yet ten thousand pounds are not to be despised. I should think it might have a little weight with even you, Mr. Wormwood.

Worm. Yes, yes,—O, to be sure. As you say, Sir Peter, ten thousand pounds are not to be despised.

Sir P. No, no, I think not.

Worm. He were surely undeserving your favours, Sir Peter, who should be insensible of them.

Sir P. True, true. But you'll excuse me for the present—I am impatient to see Belinda.

Worm. You remember, Sir Peter, that I am not to appear in this business.

Sir P. Certainly, certainly. [Exit.

Worm. (*solus.*) So, so, this is politic; this is a master-stroke, and can scarcely fail of success. Belmour's letter to Belinda, too, so fortunately intercepted by my friend,

may prove an excellent auxiliary. I find by his note here, that he yesterday changed the cover of this epistle, and addressed it immediately to Arabella. This must embroil them admirably; and if by some further expedient we can but hinder the parties from meeting, so that no disentanglement may take place; and if in consequence of our Machiavelism, Belville and Belmour should be provoked to fight, why it is highly probable, that Lovemore and I—but I will not anticipate my good fortune. [Exit.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter OLD HARCOURT *and* YOUNG HARCOURT, *meeting.*

Har. Ha! Mr. Harcourt, ever on the wing. Bound, I presume, to Sir Peter's.

Old H. Right, Captain Moreton, right. I should, indeed, have been there much sooner, but that I accidentally met with Harry Marlow—you know Harry?—who detained me upwards of an hour in telling me a very strange story of a guardian and his ward; of an old fellow, who is in love with the ward; of a young one, who is his rival, and the devil knows what.

Har. Indeed! (*aside.*) But how could Marlow—O, Lovemore, in whom I trusted—it was wrong.

Old H. Yes, and that he had been told by the rector here, who is his particular friend, that this same guardian, in the course of two or three weeks, would dispose of the lady in marriage.

Har. (*aside.*) Distraction! How am I to proceed?—And, yet some good is blended with the evil; for to be aware of this circumstance may be well.

Old H. You seem surprised, Captain? Are you any way—

Har. Surprised! O, not at all, Sir. I have heard of the affair before; and knowing the parties, and—and—in short, I am a little vexed about it, Sir.

Old H. Well, but according to Marlow's account, it's a devilish comical piece of business—I can hardly think it true.

Har. Very true, I assure you.

Old H. I have no rival—and yet—guardian and ward—Egad, it's a good deal like my own case.

Har. (*laughs aside.*) Very much indeed, Sir. That is, it would be so, if you were old; if there were any Jack to supplant you with the fair.

Old H. But Marlow tells me, that the suitors to the lady are father and son; that the son, who is but just returned to England, after an absence of many years, appears before his father, a penurious, pitiful, selfish, old rogue, (*Young Har. nods,*) under a borrowed name; and that this Sir Thrifty, keen as he is in most things, will frequently hold a conference with this hopeful youth, without knowing him, or even suspecting that he is his rival! Is that true, too?

Har. Very—very true, indeed, Sir (*stifling a laugh*).

Old H. Ha! ha! ha! what a dolt he must be, for Harry informed me, that the youth is frequently off his guard; frequently incautious in his words.

Har. The old boy must be rather dull, to be sure, Sir.

Old H. Dull! O, a blockhead, an absolute blockhead. But who are the parties? Marlow wouldn't mention names.

Har. Pardon me, Sir; you might be tempted to mar their scheme.

Old H. Mar their scheme! Not I, indeed. Come, come, you may confide in me.

Har. No, no, you would certainly defeat the project.

Old H. I will not, I tell you. I never spoil sport.

Har. Pray excuse me. Let it suffice, at present,

that the parties are your friends, and that you will know the whole in a little time.

Old H. My friends! enough, enough. I'll suspend my curiosity. We shall have a glorious laugh, eh, captain? a glorious laugh, indeed.

Har. O, to suffocation; and if the young one should carry the lady——

Old H. As I hope he will.

Har. Right, Sir, I hope so too—why it will furnish laughter for all the town. But you will be particularly pleased with it, I'm sure.

Old H. Aye, aye, I can enjoy a laugh, even at the expense of my friend. How the old fellow must look, when he discovers the cheat—ha! ha! ha!

Har. True, Sir, true—to see his immeasurable length of face.

Old H. What a ridiculous situation—ha! ha! I think I see him now.

Har. So do I—so do I (*both laugh*).

Old H. But this young genius, this Proteus, must have a cursed deal of assurance—a right impudent scoundrel, truly!—don't you think so?

Har. Why, Sir, that—as to that—why to be sure—it depends a good deal on circumstances, Sir.

Old H. Circumstances! why, what if Jack were to come home, and play me such a trick now?

Har. O, you'd think it immensely pleasant, laugh heartily at it, and forgive him. I am sure you would.

Old H. (*aside.*) Should I so? you're confoundedly mistaken though, I can tell you that.

• *Har.* Well, Sir,—but the lovely Melissa—How stands she affected towards you at present?

Old H. That I shall know from Sir Peter, to whom I am now going. I have left the Lady to make her own conditions, and this morning sent her a *carte blanche* for that purpose.

Har. O, if that be the case, you can scarcely fail.

Old H. I think not. Well, adieu!

Har. Farewell. When we next meet, I hope it will be to laugh over the business we have been talking about.

Old H. I sincerely wish it may. But you promise to make me acquainted with every particular.

Har. O, every thing—nothing shall be hid from you, I give you my word.

Old H. When once the old fox is uncover'd, we shall have excellent sport.

Har. Yes, yes, but keep yourself in a laughing humour—all must be merriment, you know.

Old H. Fear not, fear not. Flexibility of muscle will be no more wanting in me, than in yourself.

Har. I shall be glad to find it so—well, farewell, Captain Harcourt, farewell—your mistress, I presume, expects you—*Vive l'amour—vive Cupidon!*

[*Exit Old H.*

Enter LOVEMORE, LUCY following.

Lov. Well, Jack! the old gentleman and you have just parted, I see. What news?

Har. 'Faith, very bad. He tells me that he has sent Melissa a *carte blanche*, in order that she may make her own terms.

Lov. The devil! I should never have suspected it.

Har. Now, as I am very desirous of bringing matters to a conclusion, you, Lucy, must intimate to Mr. Harcourt that I (Captain Moreton) am deeply enamoured of your Mistress.

Lucy. That will bring them to a conclusion, indeed; for in that case, your father will certainly marry her.

Har. No, no. Do as I desire, and leave the rest to me—(*Lucy retires to the back scene.*)—Now, Lovemore, you must instantly find out the old gentleman—exclaim loudly against my treachery. Say, that I have resolved on sending him a challenge, and that he, in his quality of soldier, will be under the necessity of accepting it.

Lov. Why, what the plague! you do not mean to meet your father?

Har. I do indeed. I have but one effort more. But walk this way, and I will acquaint you with my scheme.
[*Exeunt.*]

LUCY comes forward.—Enter ROBERT.

Rob. Madam—Miss Moreland—Lucy! Well, I vow to gad, child, I took you for your Lady.

Lucy. Really! But you don't mean this as a compliment to me, I hope.

Rob. O, the confident baggage! Why you don't suppose yourself handsomer than Arabella, do you?

Lucy. Ladies are but indifferent judges of their own beauty, Sir.—But when are we to see our new admirer, Mr. Lovemore?

Rob. Egad, I hardly know what to say to you, child—for I and my master have so many of these affairs upon our hands already that—

Lucy. You, and your master—

Rob. Yes, I and my master, Madam. Why I dare say now, on a moderate computation, he may have at this present time twenty or thirty mistresses, and I, much about the same number. So that we haven't much time to spare.

Lucy. So I should imagine, Sir.

Rob. I will, however, use my best endeavours to serve both your lady and Mr. Lovemore. But first give me leave to say a word or two on my own account: for you must know, my dear, that I always take care of myself before I serve my master. Now, child, I have long intended to make a tender of my love to you, and have several times, indeed, been on the point of explaining myself; but having a consummate deal of an odd sort of a—a—modesty I may call it,—deuce take me if I could utter a word.

Lucy. Modesty! a very pretty gentleman to talk of

modesty, truly, who has just been bragging of having twenty or thirty mistresses.

Rob. O, you mistake me, my dear,—when I sue on honourable terms, I mean. . . . Gadso! is not that Sir Peter, who is coming this way?

Lucy. No, no,—or if it had, what reason have you to fear him? He knows not for what purpose you came hither.

Rob. Not from any information that you have given him, I firmly believe. But he certainly does know it, and must therefore deal with the devil: or, perhaps, he is skilled in metoposcopy.

Lucy. Metoposcopy—What's that?

Rob. Why, the art of knowing other people's inclinations.

Lucy. That must be a curious art, indeed. I would I knew it, I should then be able to tell if you have really the regard for me you profess.

Rob. My angel! Do you doubt it? By Heaven I will marry you this very day.

Lucy. And leave me, unprotected, the next—repudiate me—

Rob. Horror! Do you think me capable of such baseness? By all the powers above, I adore you! and were I but happy in the possession of thee, my dear Lucy, my soul would as reluctantly part from my body, as I from you.

Lucy. “O man for flattery and deceit renown'd.”—

Otway. No more of your fustian, good Mr. Robert.—I abominate it. Yet your promises are fair, I must confess: and I am rather prone to believe—on certain conditions then—but I will tell you more of my mind another time.

Rob. Well, well, I take my leave—(*going*).—Gadzooks! only to observe the effect of your witcheries, of your fascinating charms! By all that's beautiful, I had nearly forgotten the very business I was sent about:—which is—my ever adorable!—that Mr. Lovemore

will to-morrow morning pay his devoirs where they may so well be expected. Fail not to acquaint your mistress with it; and while they are settling matters above stairs, you and I, according to ancient custom, will settle ours below. So farewell, my charmer. *[Exit.*

Lucy. Farewell!—This fellow, after all, is not so much amiss. My first love, indeed, was William, and him I would still prefer. But then man is so inconstant an animal!—Well, a little time will determine the matter. There can be no sort of harm, however, in having two strings to one's bow,—so, till I have secured Mr. William, I will e'en keep a sharp eye on Mr. Robert.

SCENE II.

Enter WITLING, meeting MODELY and BELMOUR.

Wit. Ha! my good Sirs, give me your protection! I have just quitted the company of a parcel of friends, who, by the way, are the most egregious fools—

Belm. Fools, and your friends, Witling?

Wit. No, no, not my friends—they are not my friends. Hang 'em, I should be ashamed to call 'em friends—No, no, they are my acquaintances, simply acquaintances; and as for them, why a man can no more help associating with fools—

Modę. Than he can help being one.

Wit. Right, right. Though, egad, I don't know if that was altogether so civilly said. But let that pass,—Modely's my friend.

Belm. Or your acquaintance,—which, Witling?

Wit. O, my friend, absolutely my friend; and he may rally—he may say any thing. O, friendship without raillery is as dull as a dance without music, or wine without company. I could no more endure a sentimental friend, than I could a sentimental comedy—one evinces as much a defect of spirit, as t'other of genius.

Belm. Thou art a pleasant fellow, Ned: and never in want of a simile! why, you make comparisons as easily—

Wit. As a bad poet makes verses; and you must do me the justice to acknowledge that they are generally apt.

Belm. Yes, yes, but the misfortune is, Ned, that by making too free with particular characters, your comparisons are frequently as ill received as—

Wit. As the corrections of a critic by an author who stands in need of them. I know that, Charles, I know that—But we men of wit and fancy must not be controlled. We had rather lose a friend than a joke at any time.

Belm. (*aside.*) Coxcomb!—Well, but though you are so indifferent with respect to the loss of a friend, Ned,—you must take care how you exercise this witty talent among the women:—you may chance to lose a mistress by it.

Wit. Plague take me if I care. Say I do lose a mistress by it, if I don't get another by the same means—(*aside to Modely.*) Arabella for that, you know,—why I'll be content, egad, to rank with you dull plodding fellows all the rest of my life.

Mode. But prithee, Witling, do this wit and humour of yours never get you into scrapes and quarrels?

Wit. Why—yes,—but then it always gets me out again; besides, I have taken a resolution never to be affronted.

Mode. Never to be affronted! Why, what if a man were to tweak you by the nose, now?

Wit. O, that, that indeed; but still it might be done in jest, you know. Some people will be offended at the most trifling things.—O, there is not a more ridiculous character on earth, than your captious, hectoring fellow.

Mode. Yes, there is—there is. Well, enjoy your fame, Ned: I am not ambitious of it: for your superiority excites men's envy, and consequently their hate.

Wit. Hate? yes, yes, they hate me worse than an

attorney hates a *non pros.* or a coward the day of battle. But what of all that?—you remember the poet:—

“ Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue.”

Belm. Why, thou must needs be a very happy fellow, Witling, admired by the women, envied by the men!

Wit. 'Faith, Charles, you may say that. I speak it without vanity; for vanity is not in my composition,—is it, Modely?

Mod. Vanity! No, no. You have abilities, to be sure; but then you are no more vain of them than a—a—

Wit. What, you're in want of a simile. Come, I'll help you out. Than a lord of his wit, or a woman of her beauty. 'It makes against myself; but I knew you meant to laugh at me.

Belm. To laugh at you! Fic, fie! Ned. We may laugh with you perhaps; but as to laughing at you, why—

Wit. Why, it would be doing no more than you have done by the rest of your acquaintance. But come, we'll not part now—where shall we dine, boys? Gadso! I had quite forgot; I must leave you, 'faith. I'm cursed sorry for it; but my Lord Modelove, Sir Novelty Fashion, and two or three more, are at this very moment considering of a dress to distinguish them from tradesmen; and they swore it might be *barbare* unless I were at the settling of it. So, I pray you, excuse me.

Belm. Well, but, Witling, you never told us how you got off with respect to the story of the lady—the married lady, whom you supposed to be a widow, you know?

Wit. O aye, true. Why, 'gad, I've hardly time to tell you now; but, in a word, I ran to all my friends—swore 'twas all invention, merely to try their credulity—

Mode. Invention! What, and they believed it to be such?

Wit. Believed it! O, the silly dogs! Yes, yes; they supposed it romance; though, by this hand, every tittle of it was true.

Belm. Hold, hold! No more of that. The lady, whom you have since been pleased to name in this business, I have the honour of knowing; now, Sir, if I hear another word—

Wit. Ha! ha! ha! What! have I really imposed on you the other way? Eh! Charles?

Belm. No, Sir; no. You are too light and trifling for me to suppose it true. But if you mention that lady's name again, on any occasion whatever, your want of consequence shall not protect you.

Wit. Psha, psha! Charles, don't grow ill-natured. You know I wouldn't, for the world, do any thing to disoblige you.

Belm. Very well, Sir. Then let me hear no more of the lady; for, if I do, I shall suspect that you have again been tattling, and I will make you answerable for it.

Wit. Tattling! Not I, 'faith, I'll never open my lips; though I heard a very strange story of Lady Betty—

Mode. What, again! Before you have well got out of one scrape—

Wit. Well, well, I say no more; I have done, 'tis no affair of mine. But people will talk, and how can I help it? I'm extremely concerned for the poor lady; the husband swears he'll sue for a divorce. 'Gad! I heard the name of her paramour; quite forgot it though; well, no matter. But as to Mrs. Loverule, I do assure you, Charles, I had not the least idea of your being acquainted with her, or the torture of an inquisition should not have forced a word from me.

Belm. I believe it, Sir; you would have been fearful of the consequences. But remember, Witling, that you are not the less criminal in traducing a woman, because you thought it might be done with impunity. Come, I will be your friend, Ned. Your failings are innumerable; but as they have arisen more from education than from principle, we may expect that you will become sensible of them. Let me advise you: forego your

gallantries; show yourself a man of reason, and endeavour to creep into the good opinion of the world.

Wit. O, as to the world's opinion, I am indifferent about it; for it as frequently condemns where it should applaud, as it applauds where it should condemn.

Mode. There is some truth in that, to be sure, *Witling*; and yet a man would willingly be thought well of.

Wit. Thought well of! Poh! there's nothing in that; for if you are extolled by one half of the town, the other half will instantly make a point of abusing you. Well, you must excuse me, 'faith; Sir Novelty expects me, and—(*going, returns*)—But, Charles, henceforward I am dumb. [Exit.

Belm. What a strange compound of impertinence and good-nature! But come, *Modely*, we must think of our appointment. [Exeunt.

Enter SIR PETER and LADY POSITIVE.

Sir P. Madam, madam—

Lady. Sir Peter, Sir Peter—

Sir P. Really, Lady Positive, you are the most provoking woman—

Lady. And you, Sir Peter, the most obstinate man. But what has occasioned our present quarrel? for, upon my word, I do not recollect the cause of it.

Sir P. 'Slife! Madam, there was not the smallest cause—

Lady. I know it, Sir Peter; and therefore think that we had better defer quarrelling till we can find a reason for it.

Sir P. Agreed, my lady; agreed.

Lady. Well, my dear, and when do you think of marrying your niece?—Belinda, I mean; for as to Arabella, I can make nothing of her. She is every whit as incomprehensible as yourself.

Sir P. Look'ee there, now! You can soon create a cause for quarrel, my lady.

Lady. Your pardon, Sir Peter; I spoke unthinkingly.

Sir P. Unthinkingly! So you always do.

Lady. Well, well—we were speaking of Belinda. She will have an excellent husband.

Sir P. You think so? I am heartily glad that we have your concurrence.

Lady. O, he has long had my good wishes, I assure you.

Sir P. Long! Why, it is not above half an hour since he mentioned the affair to me.

Lady. Half an hour! Why, you know, my dear, that Mr. Belmour—

Sir P. Belmour! Psha! psha! I am speaking of Mr. Wormwood.

Lady. Wormwood! Why, haven't you always encouraged Belmour?

Sir P. Yes; and I now mean to encourage Wormwood.

Lady. And you have some excellent reason for this no doubt.

Sir P. I have; he is a man of the highest character.

Lady. Notwithstanding which, I have no high opinion of him, I can tell you; and if Belinda should condescend but for a moment to listen to him, I renounce her for ever.

Sir P. And if she does not condescend, as you call it, not only to listen to him, but to receive his addresses, and seriously, why she must renounce ten thousand pounds. So, there's an end of that.

Lady. But there is not an end of that; and there never shall be an end of it, if you are guilty of such great injustice.

Sir P. Well, well; but Belmour is not the man I took him for. You must know, then, that Arabella—but some one is coming; retire, my lady. Besides, Belinda can better inform you. [Exeunt.]

Enter ARABELLA, followed by MODELY.

Mode. Well, but, Arabella, this is really too much. This severity will be the death of him. Poor Belville!

Ara. Poor Belville! yes, I do sincerely pity him.

Mode. Pity him! Rather say, Madam, that you treat him with contempt.

Ara. Mercy on us! what a construction some people will put upon things! Why, that which you have mistaken for contempt is pity; real, downright pity. For, finding him so desirous of making me his wife, and knowing the misfortunes that are attendant upon marriage, I have taken pity on him, and absolutely hindered him from becoming miserable. Is not this commiseration commendable?

Mode. Admirably turned, I must acknowledge. However, Madam, were I your lover—

Ara. Well, Sir, and what then, of your wondrous wisdom, pray?

Mode. Why, then, Madam, I would give you leave to call me fool for ever after, if I suffered you to serve me a second time in the same manner you have served Belville.

Ara. Impertinent! This is beyond endurance.

Mode. This coquetry, Arabella, will be the ruin of you,—it will, upon my soul: the whole town rings with it. If short, there is scarcely an antiquated spinster who is not rejoicing at the thought of your becoming one of the sisterhood.

Ara. This freedom, Mr. Modely, is disagreeable. I shall certainly grow angry, Sir.

Mode. Come, come, Miss Moreland, you know that I ever piqued myself on being a plain dealer. There are instances of faithful lovers having become arrant libertines, and merely because they had been slighted by their mistresses. Let not that be the fate of Belville,

nor suffer him to seek in another that happiness which you have denied him. I know you love him.

Ara. Love him? horrid! O, the slander!

Mode. Nay, nay, do not attempt to conceal it. In raptures he acquainted me with the generous confession you made to him this morning. Did you not give him more than hopes?

Ara. Perhaps I might, to get rid of him—to be freed from his importunities, to—

Mode. Yes, yes, employ the only means that could keep your lover, by way of getting rid of him. Very likely!

Ara. I should be glad to know, Sir, by what right I am thus questioned by you?

Mode. By the right of friendship, Madam; a right which I would not forego, though an empire were to be my reward. My friend is miserable, Miss Moreland; it is in your power to make him happy.

Ara. By this familiarity, Mr. Modely, you will certainly incur my displeasure.

Mode. I should be sorry, Madam, actually to offend you: but if you persevere in this behaviour there may be danger of—

Ara. Danger of what, Sir?

Mode. Of Mr. Belville's becoming as much in love with another as he is now with you. Nay, it is reported that he has made overtures to Lady Melvin.

Ara. Improbable!

Mode. But not impossible. A man will not for ever condescend to be corrected or caressed according to a woman's fancy. There are intervals, Madam, in which he views the folly of such conduct; and after having in vain employed those means which might have ensured success with any lady of a less capricious disposition, he assumes the spirit which becomes his station, and rejects her with disdain.

Ara. An excellent picture of majestic man! But you should remember, Mr. Modely, that the painter who is

desirous to please, seldom copies nature too closely in his portraits.

Mode. I have exhibited him, Madam, such as he really is, without any false colouring.

Ara. If it be indeed a faithful likeness, I can only say, that I shall never be able to look on the original without horror.

Mode. This is affectation.

Ara. Not in the least. But now hear me: on the other side of the canvass, you may draw this redoubtable hero kneeling at the feet of his mistress, and in a state bordering on despondency imploring her pardon; while she, regaining that spirit which is becoming to her station, looks on him with an indifference which seems to say, "I am unmoved by your distress."

Mode. Though at the same time she is in continual agitation lest he should understand those looks, and leave her to repent of them.

Ara. You are exceedingly provoking, Modely, and if you stay much longer, I do really believe I shall fall in love with you for your impudence. To be serious, though,—do you think, now, that if I should be foolish enough to marry this Belville—But it is impossible: it can never be, and so—How significant that look is now! Do you suppose it would give me any uneasiness if he were actually married? (*peevishly and much agitated.*)

Mode. Were I to judge from your composure, Madam, I should imagine not; but the world says, that you adore him.

Ara. The world, Sir, is as impertinent as you are.

• *Mode.* And yet, Miss Moreland, your continually railing against him strengthens the opinion. But in these fantastical times, a lady must not seem content, though she have the best of lovers, or the best of husbands.

Ara. You grow much too censorious, Sir. No more of this language, I pray you.

Mode. Then, Madam, I take my leave—Only remember, Miss Moreland, that there may be danger. [*Exit.*]

Ara. (alone.) This Modely is the most insufferable creature—

Enter WITLING and BELVILLE.

Wit. (introducing Belv.) Mr. Belville, Madam, a particular friend of mine, whom I have brought.—(*Aside.*) He seems perfectly petrified, struck dumb by her beauty: I have felt it myself. She's a lovely rogue, that's certain. This amour will do me infinite credit, egad. He surveys her very attentively, though: 'faith, I don't altogether like that.

Ara. Mr. Witling, I am glad to see you. I began to think you had deserted us.

Wit. O, not for the world, Ma'am; but really I have so many—

Ara. O, I understand you; the ladies—

Wit. (aside.) She has hit it, egad.—O Lord, no, Ma'am, but—(*runs up to Belville, who is standing on the other side of the stage, with his eyes fixed on Arabella,*) How d'ye like her?

Belv. Like her!—

Wit. Aye, what d'ye think of her?

Belv. Think of her! why I think her the most—

Wit. Go on—the most beautiful, elegant,—go on, go on—

Belv. No, Sir, the most false, the most perfidious of her sex, as you soon will find.

Wit. Hold, hold! 'pon my soul, you wrong her there. No, no; she has been extremely faithful to me:—a most inviolable attachment, I must say that.

Belv. To you! attached to you!

Wit. To me? aye, certainly. Why, what the plague, you don't suppose she's attached to you, do you?

Belv. Give me leave to ask you, Madam, if it is at your desire that I am brought hither by this gentleman.

Wit. (aside.) Egad, I believe he's better acquainted here than I thought he was.

Ara. Really, Mr. Belville, your inquiries are, of late, so very many, that—Sir, I plead privilege, and will not answer to interrogatories, placed as I am at the bar of your criminal court.

Belv. (falteringly.) 'I conceive, Madam—I say, I conceive, Madam, that I am brought hither, at your express desire, to be made the sport of yourself and followers.

Ara. You do not think too highly of your qualities, Sir; you do not overrate yourself. What an obliging lover,—who, rather than his mistress should be *ennuïé* for even a day, will endeavour to excite her mirth, though at the expense of himself!

Wit. (aside.) Lover! here's a cursed piece of business! I wish I were fairly rid of it. Worse than Jack Voluble's affair, by the Lord Harry!

Belv. This affected pleasantry, Madam, shall not divert me, nor hinder me from proclaiming you to the world as the most deceitful of women.

Wit. (aside.) 'Faith, I think I had better make good my retreat. She may call upon me, perhaps, to vindicate her character, and I shall get an affair of honour on my hands, which, as I am no way ambitious of, why—
(going.)

Ara. You are not going, Mr. Witling? I cannot bear to lose you so soon.

Wit. Why really, Madam, a business of the greatest consequence—

Ara. Nay, tell not me of business. You, a man of gallantry! Fie, Mr. Witling, fie!

Wit. (aside.) The devil take this gallantry!—*ame de ma vie*, if it was not the most important—

Ara. O, I insist on your staying. You are my *preux chevalier*, and I shall want you to protect me against this terrible giant.

Wit. (aside.) Just as I imagined, by Jupiter! O my cursed vanity! into what a state of jeopardy hast thou brought me!—What, my friend Belville, Ma'am?—

O, he is a very honest fellow, I assure you ; a little given to pleasantry, that's all. If any other had presumed—

Belv. Honest fellow ! and presumed ! Pray, Sir—

Wit. (*aside.*) Nay, nay, I only meant to bring us both off. This is a foolish affair ; it is not worth quarrelling about.

Belv. Well, Madam, what am I to think of all this ? But if you mean to discard me, and to make choice of this coxcomb, instantly declare it.

Ara. Then here is my hand, Mr. Witling.

Wit. Which thus I welcome with a “ holy kiss.”

Belv. Confusion !—For you, Sir, I insist on immediate satisfaction !

Wit. Satisfaction ! Why what the devil ails the man ? the lady has decided. If she had declared for you, think you that I should have insisted on immediate satisfaction ?

Belv. I believe not. But, Sir, you have seduced that lady's affections.

Wit. Seduced ! Not I, by my soul ! Have I, Miss Moreland ?

Ara. (*aside.*) O the wretch ! he'll make people believe, presently, that I have seduced him.—Why really, Mr. Witling, I must do you the justice to acknowledge, that you have not.

Wit. There, Sir, are you satisfied now ? However, you and I, Belville, are old friends ; we must not quarrel about such a trifling matter as this ; so, as your pretensions to the lady are prior to mine—why—why, I think you must e'en take her.

Ara. So you give me up, Mr. Witling ;—absolutely renounce me, Sir ?

Wit. Why really, Ma'am, if it was not from painful apprehension of murdering my dear friend here—

Ara. Never think of that ; you may not hit him ;—or there is a chance that he may kill you, and then you fall with honour, you know.

Wit. Why as to that, Ma'am, I am perfectly sensible

of the honour ; but my existence is of consequence to so very many, that I am under the necessity—

Ara. And is it even so? Ah, unhappy me! I had vainly imagined myself to be the very first in your consideration.

Wit. (*aside.*) As, by the honour you intended me, I find I am in yours.—I tell you what, Belville, I don't believe she cares a straw for either of us. There is certainly some damned fellow or other whom she's inclined to favour, and therefore would set us to cutting one another's throats: now I am of opinion, that it would be better—

Belv. Well, Madam, your hero does not think you worth fighting for.

Wit. Hush, hush. No, I didn't say that, neither.

Belv. Then instantly follow me.

Ara. O, I should like immensely to be fought for!

Wit. (*aside.*) Should you so? 'Gad you shall not have me to fight for you, though.—And so, Ma'am, you would like to see us a-tilting?

Ara. Extravagantly! and I will appeal to Mr. Belville, whose courage is unquestioned, and who is confessedly the champion of beauty, if any thing could be more glorious than to lose your life in defence of the fair?

Belv. I really think there might: To lose it in defence of one's country, for example.

Wit. Nay, nay, this is nothing but a distinction without a difference; for in either case, the glory to me would be the same. But where's the necessity for fighting, if we can settle matters without it?

Belv. Go! you are a coward and a—

Wit. (*aside.*) By Mars and Bellona, I'll e'en show a little courage; she'll never let us fight, I think: what she said, could be only to try my spirit.—Well, Sir, since nothing less will content you—

Ara. Mr. Belville, I entreat—Mr. Witling, I command you to desist!

Wit. (*aside.*) Pretty soul! She loves me tenderly, after

all. Yes, yes; what she said was merely in the way of raillery.—If he declines the combat, Madam, he's a poltroon, and—
[*Draws.*

Belv. Nay, then—

Ara. Hold, hold—you frighten me to death. Mr. Witling, I once more command you to desist.

Wit. Your commands, Madam, must be obeyed; and as a proof of the high opinion I entertain of your understanding, I shall not scruple to leave you in the hands of my rival.
[*Exit.*

Belv. Rival! But he is gone, and with an air of triumph! Is it possible that Arabella can really be inclined to favour him?

Ara. O lud, yes: for I am prodigiously taken with his manner, I assure you.

Belv. Happy coxcomb! And yet, that such a woman should give encouragement to such a—Is it possible, I say, that Miss Moreland can think of making such a pitiful coxcomb her husband?

Ara. Why not, Sir? And since I am rejected by Mr. Belville—

Belv. Rejected, Miss Moreland?

Ara. Why should I not give my hand to that man, whom, after him, I consider as the most worthy of it?

Belv. You are undoubtedly at liberty, Madam, to pursue your inclination. But to say that I rejected you—

Ara. Is saying true. Have you not sworn never to see me more?

Belv. And was it without a cause? 'Sdeath, Madam, do I ever come to your house but what I find it filled with fops, fellows without ideas, without a grain of understanding?

Ara. Hold, Sir, hold. Possibly they entertain the like opinion of you. But would you have me rude? Would you have me shut the door against my friends?

Belv. Friends! Your lovers, Madam, your lovers,—who offer up the incense of flattery at your shrine,

and make you vain of that beauty which it has pleased Heaven to bestow upon you.—Were an ugly woman to be continually repining at her want of beauty, she would become the sport of all who knew her. The handsome one who is ever pluming herself on being so, is not, in my opinion, less ridiculous.

Ara. What antediluvian notions! But, Sir, that woman would assuredly be pitied, who should be unconscious of her charms.

Belv. She would not be the less engaging, Madam. But 'tis a phoenix, a *rara avis*, which there is little chance of finding. Consider, Madam,—I say, consider, that pain or sickness may deprive you of that complexion—

Ara. Insupportable!

Belv. Nay, destroy, perhaps, that fine symmetry—those beautiful features—

Ara. Horrid!—But prithee tell me now, and seriously, Can one help being handsome? and if one *is* handsome, can one help people being in love with one?

Belv. O Miss Moreland! did you but know how ill this levity, this affectation shows in you, you would, I am sure, at once forego it.

Ara. Levity! Affectation! You presume, I find, on my good nature. Your temper, Belville—that fretful temper—

Belv. Unkind and cruel! you raise my suspicion, and then affect to wonder at it; torture, yet forbid me to complain.*

Ara. I will freely own to you, Mr. Belville, that I once imagined, vainly imagined—But it is past. If my presence is painful to you, fly me.—Do you hesitate?

Belv. You are my fate.—My feet deny their office. You know your power; use it generously.

Ara. (*aside.*) Say you so, my gentle Damon?—then I have my cue. And has Arabella, the inconstant, fickle Arabella, her attractions still? Can Belville, the

haughty, lordly Belville, give up his manly reason—and that to a foolish woman? (*smiling.*)

Belv. Now, Arabella, you are indeed yourself. Be ever thus, and I am wholly yours.

Ara. (*changing her tone.*) Then there is once more peace. But I am sorry you have driven Witling away.

Belv. Sorry! Are you serious?

Ara. Serious! certainly. I delight in seriousness.—O, by the way, when we are married, Belville, he must positively be my *cavalière servente*.

Belv. *Cavalière servente!*

Ara. O lord, yes. What's a married woman without her *cavalière servente*? for who is there to attend her to opera, ball, and play, you know?

Belv. Opera, ball, and play! Why, if she occasionally went to either, I should suppose her husband might attend her.

Ara. Husband!—O, hideous! impossible!

Belv. Indeed!

Ara. Or supposing it possible, did you ever hear of such a thing? Why you'd be paragraphed for a month, or perhaps a year—as thus:—"Intelligence extraordinary. It is an undeniable fact, that Mr. Belville and Lady were yesterday evening seen together (*together in italics*) in a box at the opera—the whole *beau monde* were alarmed, &c. &c."—and then conclude, perhaps, with a thousand sarcasms, which no mortal could endure. So that you see there's no existing without a dangler.

Belv. I cannot understand you, Miss Moreland; you are more difficult to expound than was ever the riddle of the Sphinx. You play with my affections. I must not, will not bear it. [*Exit.*]

Ara. Stay!—He is gone, and somewhat angrily, methinks. I have been rather cruel, to be sure. Well, no matter; I must be the more condescending when we meet again.

[*BELINDA crossing the stage.*]

Belinda, where are you going, my dear?

Bel. To my chamber. I met Belville at the door—what, you have settled the day, I suppose?

Ara. Settled the day, indeed! I really do not think I shall marry this Belville these six years. Lord! there is something so diverting, so agreeable, in teasing these creatures, that I have more than once had an intention of writing an essay on it. “The Pleasures of Tormenting.” How d’ye like the title? I will positively make you study it, Belinda; for I observe, my dear, that you have not the least idea of tormenting any one except yourself.

Bel. Nor do I desire it. But if you do not think yourself a proficient in the business, here come a couple from whose example I think you may profit.

Ara. O, the pestilence! Let us fly them with the utmost speed. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter SIR PETER and LADY.

Sir P. Monstrous, monstrous! But she shall return no more to her cousin’s house. No, no, I’ll have her immediately locked up.

Lady. Locked up, Sir Peter. I never heard of such a thing in any Christian country. But what if Melissa did entertain a lover—

Sir P. Entertain a lover! I’ll have no lovers entertained but what are of my choosing. Fops and foplings are eternally buzzing around my house like bees about a hive. Beside, you very well know, my Lady, that the fairest fruits will ever attract the flies.

Lady. I am perfectly sensible of that, Sir Peter (*bridling*.) But this is such a Turkish custom—so very barbarous—I suppose I shall be locked up next.

Sir P. (aside.) I heartily wish you were:—I’ll mortify her, however. You locked up! no, no, Lady Positive,

no occasion for that, you are perfectly safe—perfectly secure, I warrant.

Lady. Am I so, Sir?—Now to let you know——

Sir P. Heyday! what the devil does the woman mean?

Lady. You are a Goth, an absolute Vandal. But tell me now, have I any enjoyment of my life? Am I not immured in the country during the greatest part of the year; and when we occasionally visit London, do you ever mix with the great world, or live like a man of fashion?

Sir P. “Never mix with the great world, nor live like a man of fashion.” Which is merely saying that I do not injure my posterity by wantonly squandering, in the course of a very few years, that patrimony which had afforded affluence to my ancestors: that I do not ruin two or three hundred simpletons, who have confided in my honour, and who have given me an unlimited credit: and finally, that I am not bandied about among my relations and friends, in search of that support which I had foolishly thrown away.—Such, Lady Positive, such too frequently is the fate of the man of fashion. He is then excluded the circles which before were eager to receive him, dignified with the title, perhaps, of a man of taste and spirit!

Lady. Really, Sir Peter, you are so strangely *outré* in your notions! You would rather walk in the fields, I warrant, and listen to the note of a cuckoo, than to the warblings of a——And then your dress—why it is so extremely rusty, that you look exactly like a bronze statue dug from the ruins of Herculaneum.

Sir P. A bronze statue! Something like it, I must confess. Well, and among all the gods of antiquity, which do I resemble most? The Thunderer, no doubt. Yes, yes, for a Jupiter tonans I am a perfect model—a model for a painter.

Lady. The Thunderer! You can make noise enough I acknowledge, though you come nearer my idea of Pan.

Sir P. Pan!—aye, aye, in one particular, I believe,

I do resemble Pan. But "gentle" Lady Positive, "to leave this keen encounter of our tongues, and come to something of more serious method"—there's a speech from a play for you. You'll be pleased with that—that 's like a person of fashion, I'm sure.

Lady. A person of fashion, indeed! Were you to build a private theatre, as every body does, you might be allowed to talk thus. Do that now, and we shall have half London to join us presently.

Sir P. Half London! very desirable, no doubt.

Lady. I understand you. But let me tell you, Sir Peter, theatricals are all the ton; and since you have not either taste or spirit to engage in any thing that is truly elegant or polite, I will set about it myself. I'll have the barn belonging to Positive Hall immediately converted into a play-house, and splendidly fitted up.

Sir P. The devil you will!

Lady. Yes, Sir, and entertain a company of ladies and gentlemen, that shall put professional performers to the blush. We'll ruin the managers of Theatres Royal, I'll engage we shall. We'll oblige them to shut up their houses.

Sir P. A very praiseworthy business, and must do a person of fashion an infinite deal of honour.

Lady. Aye, you may jeer and sneer, Sir Peter, as much as you please. I don't regard that. I know what is befitting a woman of rank. I know what is becoming my station, I can tell you. [Exit.

Sir P. Aye, aye, riot and extravagance. But I must now have a little conversation with my ward. [Exit.

. *Enter Lucy, followed by ROBERT.*

Lucy. How say you, Mr. Robert? That you have neither letter nor message from that paragon of men, your master—the acknowledged Lovelace of the day.

Rob. Why, really, my charmer, and as I lately observed to you, I cannot now attend to my master's love

affairs. I must think of my own. So tell me, lovely rogue, when shall we conclude the business? I popped the question, you may remember, above a week ago. You did not put a negative on it; and my passion, from so long delay, is boiling up like, like—I know not what. Mark me then—I am the last of my name, and if you do not take compassion on me, that distinguished name will probably be lost. Think on that, I entreat you. Think well on it, and with the seriousness it deserves.

Lucy. It would, indeed, be a terrible thing that so great a name should perish. An affair of such moment is entitled to a long and serious consideration. I will devote a quarter of an hour to it this very afternoon.

Enter WILLIAM, hastily.

Wm. Ha! my dear, my adorable Lucy.

Rob. Dear and adorable. Sir, my pretensions to this lady—

Wm. And, Sir! my right to this lady—

Lucy. Right? Mr. William! you are much too presuming. I have listened to your addresses, it is true, but I must candidly acknowledge that the *pretensions* of Mr. Robert are at least equal to yours.—Mercy on me: was ever poor woman in such a dilemma. O, what a puzzling case!

Sings.

“Which way shall I turn me? how can I decide,
When two such fine fellows would make me a bride?”

Rob. Well, then, since our pretensions are, as Mrs. Lucy acknowledges, equal, we must decide the matter by a tilting bout. You, Madam, can scarcely have any objection to that?

Lucy. Why, there certainly could be no objection to your fighting; that is, were I sure that only one of you would *bite the dust*. But should it happen that both were killed, what am I to do then?

Rob. Very well put, Mrs. Lucy. But do not be unhappy about it. I can make sure of my man. In a word, I should have been a match for the Admirable Crichton himself. Yes, yes, I will engage to kill this same Mr. William; and in so agreeable a manner, with so little pain, that he shall not even cry, Oh!

Wm. Very comfortable, very inviting, I must confess.

Rob. And now, Sir, either give up all hope of possessing this angel, or prepare to meet me at *Battle Bridge* (the very name awakens courage) to-morrow morning at six o'clock. Sword or pistol, take your choice.

Lucy. Well, but my valourous Hector, my invincible Achilles, consider this matter, I pray.

Rob. Consider! What is there for consideration? You are a charming creature, and something must be done to deserve your love.

L. Ah, gentlemen, gentlemen, you little think, you little imagine what a mischance has befallen me.

Wm. Mischance! What in the name of Heaven can have happened to you?

Lucy. O, Sirs, Sirs—ruined, ruined. I am utterly undone.

Rob. Ruined? The villain! Had he as many lives as a cat. I would have them all. He dies!

Lucy. Ha! ha! ha! You mistake the *kind* of ruin, Mr. Robert. I am ruined in my fortune, nothing more. Not a shilling left.

Wm. How is this!—Not a shilling left?

Lucy. Not a penny.—(*Aside*)—So, so. They seem completely posed. Now by this pretended loss, by this feigned poverty, I shall put their regard for me to the test.

Rob. Not a penny remaining. The devil! That, indeed, alters the case.—What were we going to fight for, eh, friend William?

Wm. Why, 'faith, friend Robert, I must honestly confess that my object was—

Rob. Her money, of course. And mine, egad, was the same. Hints were given me that she had saved up a pretty sum.

Wm. Oh, oh! There is then a necessity for putting off the duel, eh, my lad?

Rob. Yes, yes—*sine die*, my friend; so give me your hand. Farewell, *unmatchable* Lucy. I must go hang or drown.

Wm. Adieu, incomparable lady. You deserve a husband with merits which neither Mr. Robert nor myself can boast. Adieu!—Ah, me, unfortunate!—I have lost my cambric handkerchief, and cannot dry up my tears. [*Exeunt, laughing. Manet Lucy.*]

Lucy. Deceitful, cowardly traitors!—But they shall not so escape.—I will study for revenge.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Enter ARABELLA and BELINDA.

Ara. Here is Belmour's letter, Belinda, that I told you about: you may have occasion for it. This, indeed, agrees with Sir Peter's account. And yet I am astonished at his having written to me. The most impassioned language, too! He never gave me the most distant reason to think—

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Mr. Belmour, Madam.

Ara. Show him up. I will retire awhile, and be sure, Belinda, you bring him to a thorough explanation.

[*Exit Arabella.*]

Enter BELMOUR.

Belm. You seem thoughtful, Madam.

Bel. And that you think extraordinary?—Do you know this letter?

Belm. Certainly, Madam.

Bel. You acknowledge it, then?

Belm. Acknowledge it, Belinda?—undoubtedly.

Bel. And so full of high-flown compliments. Well, I really thought it had been a forgery.

Belm. A forgery? No, no, Madam, it is no forgery. The letter is certainly mine (*smiling*).

Bel. Matchless confidence! But give me leave to ask you, Sir, what am I to think of this epistle? How am I to consider it?

Belm. As containing my real, my unalterable sentiments, Madam: as containing the warm effusions of a heart filled with—

Bel. Enough, enough—

Belm. And shall I be pardoned the importunity?

Bel. Undoubtedly, Sir. The importunity of a lover is always pardonable.

Belm. Kind creature! And you think there will be no objection, no impediment—

Bel. None in the least, I dare answer.

Belm. My adorable—

Bel. Heaven defend me,—you are going to relapse, I fear.

Belm. (*aside.*) Relapse! What the devil does she mean? I was in hope, Madam, that the letter would have convinced you—

Bel. It has, and fully, Sir. I have not a doubt remaining.

Belm. Thus, on my knee, I thank you.

Enter ARABELLA.

Ara. Heyday! But really, Mr. Belmour, this is a little out of character. Upon my word, Sir, I shall grow

extremely jealous, if I find you in these supplicating attitudes.

Belm. You are pleasant, Madam ; and are for rallying me on my passion.

Ara. You are greatly mistaken, Sir, I was never less inclined to raillery. But come, Mr. Belmour, for once be ingenuous. Here we are together, Belinda and I ; which will you have ? prithee be quick, you can't expect both, Sir, and it is rather unhandsome to be on your knees to one silly girl, while you are writing letters to another. For my part, I have been monstrously in love with you ever since I saw that delightful epistle. Do you know now, that I think it equal to Voiture.

Belm. You speak in enigmas, Madam—for deuce take me if I comprehend a word of all this.

Ara. Well carried ! Look on that letter, Sir.

Belm. “To Arabella”—’sdeath ! here is some trick. This is your contrivance, Miss Moreland, done with the view, I suppose, of tormenting Belville.

Ara. No, on my honour, Sir. The letter was brought to me by William, exactly as you see it.

Belm. William ? The rascal ! Allow me to question him about it.

Ara. Lucy ! send William here.

Belm. This letter, Madam, was addressed to your sister. The cover has been changed—by whom, or for what purpose, I am yet to learn. But here comes the gentleman who very probably can unriddle.

[*Enter WILLIAM.*]

Come hither, fellow.

Will. (*aside.*) He has found me out, I see.

Belm. Did you receive this letter ?

Will. Ah ! a lie will be of no service—yes, Sir.

Belm. Very well. Now tell me into whose hands it fell, before it reached this lady.

Will. Sir, as I hope to be—

Belm. No equivocation, rascal—answer me directly, or—

Will. Why then, Sir—you must know, Sir—that Mr. Wormwood happening to come to the door, Sir, at the very moment that your servant brought the letter, Sir—did, by dint of bribery (alas! Sir, who can withstand it?) compel me to give it up to him, Sir. I dwelt long and eloquently on the heinousness—I remonstrated—

Belm. Peace, rogue!—But what could Wormwood mean by this?

Bel. O, I will tell you. He is a secret admirer of mine; but knowing the little chance he had of succeeding with me by direct and open means, he ingratiated himself with Sir Peter: and has farther hoped, I suppose, by this device, to create between us such a misunderstanding as might afterward be turned to his own advantage.

Belm. The villain! He shall answer this immediately.

Ara. I must insist on your silence. Belinda and I have by accident become acquainted with some other, and more mischievous schemes of his. We have already determined on his punishment; and rest assured Mr. Belmour, we will have our measure of revenge.

[*Exeunt Ara. and Bel. on one side,*
Belm. on the other.]

SCENE II.

Enter WORMWOOD and LOVEMORE.

Worm. So you never imagined I should succeed there, eh, Lovemore?

Love. Why, 'faith, I am a little surprised at it. That a woman like her should—'Tis rather awkward for a man to commend himself, and yet I thought that in these matters I had modest assurance sufficient to—

Worm. O, you mistake the case entirely. For example, now, if you have an inclination to do a particularly impudent thing; do you imagine that it is to be effected merely by dint of impudence, or modest assurance, as you call it?

Love. Certainly. How the plague can it be otherwise effected?

Worm. How! Why, by modesty, to be sure.

Love. Modesty! What, an impudent thing?

Worm. Aye, Sir, there's a paradox for you. In short, I carry on a covert, you an open war. Now, Sir, I will pit my modesty against your impudence—

Love. But, in an age like the present, modesty, methinks, is but an indifferent recommendation.

Worm. Right, Sir—right; the truly modest starve. But *Ars est celare artem*—it is the business of art to conceal art. That is my maxim; and, egad, it will hold good in every profession.

Love. Very true, Wormwood; and you are, unquestionably, an adept. The palm is yours.

Worm. 'Faith, Sir, I have studied hard to obtain it. O, purity, well-dissembled purity, can never fail. By virtue of that, the wary father will promote my suit with his daughter, and the jealous husband will leave me alone with his wife.

Love. But in the latter case, I should suppose, your purity—

Worm. Aye, then, indeed, it may be necessary to unmask. But this reminds me of Arabella. How have you succeeded there—any hope?

Love. Why, 'faith, Wormwood, mine is but a forlorn hope. I have some qualms of conscience, too—I must e'en give over the pursuit.

Worm. Poo, poo! this compunction is ill-timed—it is ridiculous.

Love. You, Wormwood, have a soaring genius. If I cannot keep pace with you, attribute it to my lack of talent. The painter may copy a Raffaele, or the player a Garrick; but we must not therefore imagine that they will easily rival those masters.

Worm. Your pleasantry is unseasonable, Mr. Love-more. I pray you, Sir, no more of it.

Love. To confess the truth, Wormwood, I am

disgusted with myself for the treacherous part I have so long been playing. I begin to feel for Belville. The confidence he reposes in me—

Worm. Gives you the better opportunity of deceiving him. Come, come, have done with this language. Let schoolmen teach morality, and idiots practise it. When a man's own happiness is at stake, every other consideration should fall before it.

Love. So my passions have repeatedly told me. But I am not dead to every virtue.

Worm. Virtue! Absurd. Virtue is undoubtedly a very convenient engine. It has, as I have already told you, been of singular service to me—the appearance of it, I mean; for 'tis in morals as in religion, the hypocrite will ever have the advantage.

Love. I am not casuist enough to determine that point. You must now consider me as a man in power, who finding his post no longer tenable, rather chooses to resign than suffer the disgrace of a dismissal.

Worm. Rather say, that you are like an unskilful gamester, who throws up his cards on seeing an indifferent hand, when, by a little art in the playing of them, he might have beat his adversary.

Love. Why, 'faith, the stake is worth contesting—twenty thousand. But then her disposition—variable as the wind. I must think no more of her.

Worm. Nay, nay, you must think a great deal more of her. But I have an engagement, and shall be beyond my time. At our next meeting we will consider what may be done. Adieu! [*Exeunt severally.*]

·
Enter SIR PETER and LADY.

Sir P. Say no more, my lady, say no more; I am convinced, I tell you. Wormwood is a villain. This is, indeed, a fortunate discovery.

Lady. And to whose penetration are you indebted for this discovery? Didn't I always tell you—

Sir P. Well, well, no occasion to dispute about that; for to say the truth, I don't believe it was owing to the sagacity of either of us.

Lady. But I can prove to you, Sir Peter, that it was entirely owing to myself.

Sir P. Why will you thus interrupt me in my affairs? I am going out, you see. He is detected; as to the who or the how, it is a matter of no consequence. So say no more about it. *[Exit Sir Peter.]*

Lady. Lucy! where's Belinda?

Lucy. (*coming forward.*) In her chamber, Madam.

Lady. Poor soul! frightened to death, I warrant, at the snare that has been laid for her. I will go directly and comfort her. *[Exeunt Lady and Lucy.]*

Re-enter SIR PETER, followed by DEMUR.

Sir P. Mr. Demur, I am heartily glad to see you. I was going to your chambers about a very particular affair. This Wormwood—

Dem. Is a great rogue: I come to acquaint you with his proceedings, Sir Peter. You must know, then, that he has been tampering with me this morning, about the articles of agreement between yourself and him, relative to his marriage with Belinda. His extraordinary eagerness to get possession of the papers, first gave rise to my suspicions. I refused to give them up. He entreated and threatened; but finding me equally unmoved by either, he had recourse to the art of bribery, and actually made me the offer of one thousand pounds to put the writings into his hands. This, you may be sure, alarmed me, and I came immediately to inform you of it.

Sir P. My dear Mr. Demur, you have laid me under the greatest obligation. But walk this way; we have a scheme in agitation to punish this fellow, and may stand in need of your assistance. *[Exeunt.]*

Enter LADY POSITIVE and LUCY, meeting.

Lucy. Mr. Lovemore is below, my lady, and is very desirous of seeing your ladyship alone.

Lady. Alone! Bless me, what shall I say? Alone! I am frightened to death.

Lucy. Pray be quick, my lady. It is certainly something of consequence.

Lady. Do you really think so, Lucy? (*Aside.*) He has been very particular to me of late.

Lucy. O, I dare swear it, my lady. He was greatly agitated, and so very impatient, that he bribed me for admittance; what does your ladyship think now?

Lady. Mercy on me! I am in such a quandary. But what is your opinion of him, Lucy?

Lucy. Why, I think him a very pretty gentleman, Madam; and as generous as a prince.

Lady. But do you think he may be trusted?

Lucy. Trusted! Ay, that he may, my lady. If I had fifty pounds, I'd trust him with it.

Lady. O, the simpleton! I mean, do you think a lady might—Bless me! what am I about? I was going to make a confidante of this foolish girl.—Well, show Mr. Lovemore up.

[*Exit Lucy.*]

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. Now, then, to sound her ladyship a little, in regard to my pretensions to Arabella. I hope she is in better humour than usual.

Lady. Mr. Lovemore, your servant. This visit, I find, is made expressly to myself. I am eager to know the cause.

Love. The cause is beauty, Madam—beauty, which may command the world.

Lady. O dear, Sir. (*bridling.*)—He is prodigiously polite.

Love. I have long hoped for the honour of conversing with you on a subject, which, as it concerns the future happiness of my life——

Lady. The future happiness of your life, Sir?—ah, me!

Love. Yes, Madam. And though I am perfectly sensible, that if the affections of a lady are any way engaged—and as in such a case, I should be extremely unwilling——

Lady. Hold, Sir. As to the affections being *engaged*, I must beg leave to undeceive you. (*Aside.*) He has never heard of Sir Peter's cross-grained humours, I perceive.

Love. I am happy to hear it; for I really began to despair.

Lady. O, never despair, Sir. Low and grovelling minds alone are given to despair.

Love. You give me new life, Madam. This encouragement is so extremely flattering——

Lady. Encouragement!—I shall faint. Encouragement, did you say?

Love. I did, Madam, and hope I am not wholly undeserving of it.

Lady. Why it must be acknowledged, indeed, that you have the appearance of being a gentleman—a man of honour.

Love. O, of the strictest honour, Madam; and the proposal I am now about to make, will no doubt convince you of it.

Lady. Proposal! Sir, this rudeness—do you suppose that I can listen——

Love. From your first reception of me, I should have thought so. But rudeness! I—I—upon my soul, Ma'am, I didn't mean to offend—I don't rightly comprehend—but if you think Sir Peter——

Lady. Sir Peter, indeed! Perhaps you had better consult him on the matter. He will give you his opinion; he will favour you with his advice, no doubt.

Love. If your ladyship thinks so, I will seek him immediately; and the sooner I get his consent——

Lady. The better.—(*Aside.*) The man is certainly distracted.—Ay, pray do, Sir, and the moment you have obtained my husband's consent, as you call it, you may depend on mine.

Love. Ten thousand thanks to you, Madam. I will not lose a moment (*going*).

Lady. Stay, stay—here Sir Peter comes. I will leave you together.—What infatuation is this! [*Exit.*

Love. So, so—this is fortunate, indeed. Her ladyship is more indulgent towards me than I expected. But now to manage the knight.

Enter SIR PETER.

Sir P. Lovemore! And this moment parted from my wife! What an impudent dog it must be—and yet I dare not quarrel with him, notwithstanding my former boast.

Love. Sir Peter, I rejoice to see you.

Sir P. And you may be very sure, Sir, after what has passed, and after all I have heard concerning your conduct, that I am exceedingly happy in seeing you.

Love. (*aside.*) Ah, ah! Victoria, my boy! the day's your own—and Arabella will be the reward of your generalship (*goes up to Sir Peter*). Nothing can be more agreeable to me, than to be honoured with the notice of Sir Peter Positive—

Sir P. And my lady—Lady Positive. You must not forget her ladyship.

Love. No, no, as you say, I must not forget her ladyship. She is, indeed, a most amiable woman.

Sir P. I am very sure you think so.

• *Love.* On my word I do.—And then to find her, when I least expected it, so very kind.

Sir P. Why aye, I always believed her to be a very good-natured woman.

Love. Good-natured! O, how cold is that expression for the favour she has done me!

Sir P. What then, you have actually settled the business with my lady?

Love. Completely, Sir Peter. Her goodness enchanted me. She absolutely anticipated my wishes.

Sir P. I have not the smallest doubt of it. As I just now observed to you, I am perfectly sensible of her goodness. Yes, yes, I very well know her heart: I very well know that she can be kind.

Love. O, Sir Peter! my dear Sir Peter! Think what it is to gain possession of the woman one loves; the woman one adores.

Sir P. (aside.) Was there ever such consummate impudence! To own it thus to my face!—And now, then, having concluded the affair with my lady, you come, in the pride of your heart, to make a boast of it to “the blockhead her husband.”

Love. Why I acknowledge, Sir Peter, that I ought to have first consulted you about it.

Sir P. Sir! Consulted me about it!

Love. For as your concurrence—as your consent—

Sir P. My concurrence! my consent!—Fire and fury!—Sir!—What, become the instrument of my lady’s dishonour!—become a pander, a procurer to my wife!

Love. Why, what the plague are you talking of, Sir Peter? are you mad?

Sir P. Mad! No, no, I am too great a fool, too great a blockhead, to go mad: you understand me, eh? too great a blockhead for that.

Love. Understand you! The devil take me if I understand a word that you say.

Sir P. Why you are not going to deny; you are not going to retract what you just now said? Your confession was ingenuous enough; and as for your Plenipo (I had almost forgot him), he is a very honest gentleman; one that you may fully confide in, believe me: though in delivering his credentials, he made a little mistake—You understand me now, eh? you understand me now?

Love. No more than if you were talking Chinese.

* *Sir P.* Why, what the devil! Didn’t you own to me

a minute ago, that you had succeeded to your wishes with my wife? Didn't you make the most impudent bravado of it, I say, and—

Love. Impudent bravado! Sir, this is a language I as little comprehend, as any that has gone before. And I must tell you,—

Sir P. (aside.) Aye, now he is going to tell me that I may take my choice; sword or pistol; 'tis exactly the same to him—

Love. I must tell you, Sir (*Sir Peter appears frightened*), that were it not that your good sense has at all times been evident to me and to all the world (*Sir Peter bows*), and that I am persuaded that you at present labour under some “biting error,” as the prince of poets expresses it, I should be really and seriously offended. I am naturally of a mild, a civil disposition, I say, or—

Sir P. Sir, you are a very civil gentleman, indeed; the civilest I ever met with. You have done me a very great injury, and yet you do not seem to have any desire of cutting my throat: and my lady, she is a very civil gentlewoman too.

Love. Still harping on your lady, Sir Peter? You have fallen into a very strange mistake here. I do assure you she is an absolute vestal for me.

Sir P. Why zounds! Didn't you talk just now of her kindness and her—

Love. Certainly; of her kindness in promoting my suit with Arabella.

Sir P. (aside.) Ha! I know not what to think of him, after all; but I will dissemble for the present, and narrowly watch his proceedings.—O, ho! your suit with Arabella—that was the business, eh? Well, step with me into the next room, and let us talk over the matter with my lady.—(*Aside.*) Now, if he has been deceiving me, I shall, by a little cross-examination, have him sure.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

ARABELLA and BELINDA.

Ara. Well, what do you think of this scheme of mine, Belinda?

Bel. Why, to say the truth, I don't half like it.

Ara. But when you are told that it has met with Belmour's approval, we shall have your assistance, I am sure. It is certain, however, that from Belville's behaviour in the matter, I shall be the better able to judge of the force of his passion. Should he be calm in the business, I have positively done with him—will absolutely give him up.

Bel. Perhaps, my dear, he has been beforehand with you, and given you up; for I have heard that he has thoughts of Lady Melvin.

Ara. Yes, and I have heard the same; but we must not give credit to these ridiculous stories.

Bel. And yet, should these ridiculous stories be succeeded by others incontrovertibly true,—

Ara. How! What is it you say?

Bel. Pardon me, Arabella; I am sorry at having alarmed you so; I was but supposing the case.

Ara. Suppose! I have a horror of such suppositions—you have put me into such a twitter!

Bel. Come, come, no more hesitation! agree to make him happy.

Ara. And myself miserable. Beside, I hate abominably to be lectured on my faults.

Bel. But if you are not told of those faults, it is scarcely to be expected that you should ever correct them.

Ara. True, my dear moralizing sister; but suppose I do not choose to correct them. There are many persons in this kingdom, whose greatest faults are considered as virtues,—But here comes my uncle, and with him Belville. Let us retire and observe them.

[*They retire.*]

Enter SIR PETER POSITIVE *and* BELVILLE.

Sir P. How, Sir! Impossible that you should fulfil your engagement; impossible that you should marry my niece?

Belv. Yes, Sir Peter, impossible. The heart of Arabella (in despair I speak it) is given to another.

Sir P. This, I suppose, is some new creation of your own jealous brain; fie, fie. In short, Mr. Belville, I cannot but consider this as so great an injury, that—

Belv. Yet hear me, Sir—

Sir P. No, Sir, I have already heard too much. I vainly imagined that Arabella's charms had power to secure a heart even more volatile than yours.

Belv. The charms of an ungrateful woman serve but as a veil to cover the deceit that lurks within her breast; and were I not a dull animal, I should not at any time have been the sport of a weak, yet designing—

Sir P. Hold, Sir. Add not insult to injury. The behaviour of my niece to Mr. Belmour has never exceeded a becoming civility, but which, when perceived by you, is immediately construed to her disadvantage. Besides, Belmour is evidently your friend.

Belv. I did, indeed, consider Belmour as my friend. His late conduct, however, has convinced me of my error; and my eyes are now open to his falsehood.—But here he comes—the author of all my woe.

;

Enter BELMOUR.

Belm. Ever, indeed, the accused, though ever the innocent, cause.

Belv. Innocent!—I have no patience! But tell me, Sir, have you not made an offer of your heart to Arabella; and has she not accepted it?—There, Sir Peter, you find he is unable to deny it—Guilt, guilt ties his tongue.

[*Belmour stands aside in seeming confusion.*]

Sir P. How comes it, Mr. Belmour, that you have

done this base, unmanly wrong? 'Slife, Sir, do you think that you may come to my house, and, like the grand signior, make choice of one of my girls on one day, and of the other on the next? Do you think I will suffer this?

Belm. I may be in some sort blameable, Sir Peter; yet, in transferring my passion from Belinda to Arabella, love must plead my excuse.

Sir P. Love! — ridiculous! Honour, honour, Sir, should be the first consideration with every man; that you have disregarded; and what security has Arabella, that she may not be as soon deserted by you, as her sister has been?—

[ARABELLA and BELINDA come forward.]

But what say you to all this, Belinda?—are you as willing to part with Belmour, as Arabella is with Belville?

Bel. Any thing that may be conducive to my sister's happiness, Sir.

Sir P. Very obliging, upon my soul. Zounds! I shall go mad.

Ara. O Lord, Sir, never make yourself uneasy about Belinda; I will engage to furnish her with a lover—Mr. Belville, Sir, perhaps you might choose—Shall I speak a word for you?

Belv. Speak for me, Madam!—I know not what you mean.

Sir P. Fire and fury! what do you all mean? Were I not the most patient man alive—well, patience is certainly a very great virtue. One gentleman rejects one of my nieces, the other rejects the other; transferring, as he calls it, his passion from the eldest to the youngest, and with as little ceremony as he would make a transfer of stock on 'Change. The ladies, too, are as unconcerned as if they were no way interested in the matter. Why, zounds! I believe you are all in a combination to distract me. As for you, Arabella—

Ara. Lord, Sir! 'tis impossible you should blame me. Did you ever hear of a girl of spirit, who, on being forsaken by one lover——

Belv. Forsaken, Miss Moreland?——

Ara. Would not endeavour to console herself for the loss of him by the acquisition of another? I, therefore, have made choice of Mr. Belmour, who, though he may not be so enviable an object as the all-accomplished Mr. Belville, will yet, I doubt not, considering the times, make a very tolerable husband.

Belm. Thank you, Madam.—(*Aside.*) But I am tired of my part, and must think of throwing off the mask.—And now, Sir Peter, I will relieve you from your anxiety. We are no way changed, but are as true and constant lovers as ever figured in romance. In a word, I am as firmly attached to Belinda, as Arabella is to Belville.

Ara. How, Sir!

Belm. Nay, Madam, you will spoil all if you interrupt me. Know, then, that Arabella engaged me in the present business, which I entered into with a seeming reluctance, insinuating that she had no real affection for Mr. Belville, and that it was projected but to torment him. This succeeded to my wish. It drew from her this letter, which I determined to make use of on a proper occasion—it now offers. The lady's declaration is under her own hand, so that it will be impossible to recede. But here is the letter, Belville, make your own comments on it.

Belv. (*reads.*) "*To Charles Belmour, Esq.*

"SIR,—The apology which you so handsomely offer
"for your free expostulations with me, in regard to Mr.
"Belville, I readily accept. Permit me, at the same
"time, to assure you, that it is from my true esteem to
"you, perhaps, I need not hesitate to say, my love for him,
"that I determine to make farther experiment on his
"heart. Assist me in this, according to my late proposal,
"and you will most essentially oblige

"ARABELLA MORELAND."

Sir P. Bravo, Charles! Why thou art a Machiavel in love. Here now has he settled in an hour or two, what they have been for years about. Well, Arabella, what acknowledgment do you make to Mr. Belmour? You must surely consider yourself particularly obliged to him.

Ara. Obligated to him!—if ever I forgive—

Belv. Charming Arabella! worthy Belmour!—

Ara. Hold, hold! no raptures. You have not got me yet.

Belv. O, but I am sure of you.—So there's cause enough for rapture.

Ara. Sure of me! Now, Sir, to convince you—

Bel. Come, come, my dear sister, it is now too late. You would acknowledge your love for him, in the letter, though I advised you to the contrary.

Ara. Advised me to the contrary! Why I inserted it at your particular instance. [All laugh.

Belm. Poor Arabella!—foiled by her own weapons.

Ara. This is all a trick—I'll not consent—

Belm. Nay, Madam, there lies no appeal. You have been accused of conspiring against the peace of Mr. Belville: you are, on the clearest evidence, found guilty, and the sentence is (since you have made so fair and open a confession of your errors), nothing more than that—

Ara. A confession of my errors! I deny that I ever—

Belm. Hear me, Madam, hear me. The sentence, I say, is a mild one; nothing more, than that from the present day you do this gentleman homage as your liefeft, sovereign lord.

Ara. Do him homage as my sovereign lord? Insufferable! This, positively, is not to be borne.

Sir P. The little minx! who could have thought that she was so deeply in love! (*Arabella walks about in seeming vexation.*) But, Belville, my boy, the twenty thousand are ready; and as a proof of the satisfaction I feel in getting this scornful lady off my hands—

Ara. (*aside.*) O, the wretch!—

Sir P. I will throw you in half as much more. I'm an obstinate old fellow, you know. Much too positive, eh?

Belv. You are all goodness, Sir Peter. I must now request forgiveness of my worthy friend here (*to Belm.*)

Belm. That you have most willingly; and I think myself happy in having been the object of your suspicion, since the issue of it will be the means, I hope, of establishing our friendship for ever.

Belv. Where is Lovemore—where is my much injured friend?

Sir P. Your much injured friend, as you are pleased to call him, Mr. Modely is gone to seek—

Belv. Heaven knows he has been injured.

Ara. Never, Sir. He has been to you the most ungrateful, treacherous man—

Belv. Impossible!

Ara. To me—but I forgive him.

Enter LOVEMORE, MODEL, and WITLING.

Love. You behold in me, Mr. Belville, a man, who as he purposes to amend his life, is the less ashamed to own that it has been wicked.

Belv. Then I have been deceived, indeed.

Love. You have. Yet well I know your generous nature, and if—

Belv. Hold, Sir. Your treacherous conduct (of which Miss Moreland often gave me more than intimation, though my besotted friendship hindered me from listening to her) cannot be extenuated. But I shall say no more—your own conscience will sufficiently reproach you.

Mode. Notwithstanding Mr. Lovemore's former conduct, Mr. Belville, he is entitled to your pardon. Honour triumphs over passion; and he this morning, of his own accord, relinquished every hope of Arabella.

Belv. Then we will again be friends. The man who can correct himself, and willingly, is, as you say, Mr. Modely, deserving of pardon.

Love. How greatly am I indebted to you—this is such an unexpected bounty! But it shall be the future study of my life to endeavour to repay it. To you, Miss Moreland, what shall I say?

Ara. Your repentance seems sincere, Mr. Lovemore; I shall be glad to find it so.

Belm. Where is that villain, Wormwood?

Sir P. I have sent for him under pretence of having something to communicate respecting Belinda; so that I warrant he will soon—Oh, here he comes—

Enter WORMWOOD.

Worm. (*aside.*) Ha! all met. Then I am discovered.

Belm. Your villany is known, Mr. Wormwood. Begone, and without punishment.

Worm. Your patience, good Sir. I shall not so easily resign my pretensions to that lady (*points to Belinda*). You have not forgot the bond, Sir Peter?

Belm. Bond! what is he talking of?

Worm. Why, I am talking of a deed, by which Sir Peter obliges himself to pay to me the sum of ten thousand pounds on my marriage with his niece; and also of another instrument, by which we are severally bound in a forfeiture of the like sum in case of refusal either on the lady's part or mine. By this, you will perceive that Sir Peter has trusted to his authority over Belinda for a compliance with his will. For myself, I am content in either case.

Belm. Is it possible, Sir Peter, that you could subscribe to such an obligation?

Worm. Yes, Sir, 'tis certainly as I tell you. He was fearful, I presume, of losing so excellent a nephew. I am honoured by his partiality, and shall retain a proper sense of it. But here I am, and ready to marry the lady.—If she refuses me, why I demand the penalty; and Sir Peter, I believe, will not be inclined to dispute it.

Sir P. I acknowledge the agreement, Mr. Wormwood; but you may remember that the deed in question

was afterwards, together with its counterpart, put into the hands of Mr. Demur, for the insertion of a clause or two relative to Belinda's jointure.

Worm. I do. But the obligation between yourself and me, Sir Peter, is still the same. One of the deeds you are welcome to; as for the other, I have given directions to the lawyer not to part with it.

Sir P. But being fraudulently obtained, he has, as every honest lawyer would have done, given up both. For your satisfaction, I have put them in my pocket. Here they are. You know them, no doubt.

Worm. Curst fortune! Since I am thus baffled in my hopes——(*going.*)

Sir P. Stay, Sir. There is still a marriage contract—

Worm. True, Sir. But why mortify me farther? you would tell me it is cancelled.

Sir P. No, Sir. You shall yet have justice.

Worm. (*aside.*) Indeed! Then I will not greatly complain. Belinda has a fine fortune in her own hands, and—

Sir P. Very little time has passed, Mr. Wormwood, since you set your hand to this paper (*showing the contract*). The lady, you may remember, was then from home, and it was suggested by Arabella, on account of some peculiarities in the temper of your betrothed,—that it should be left with me to see her sign. This you readily agreed to.—I have executed my commission. Now call in the lady.

Enter LADY POSITIVE, MELISSA, LUCY, and DEMUR.

Worm. Damnation! what means all this——

Sir P. There, Sir, is your wife (*points to Lucy*).

Worm. Nay, Sir, this shall not pass. The name of Belinda was fairly written in the contract. I examined it carefully.

Sir P. That I grant you. But at the desire of this fair one whom you would have tricked into a marriage, (and that too by means which the basest of men would blush at), a second was hastily drawn up. One bears

the name of Belinda Moreland, the other that of Lucy Villars.—The first was presented to you for perusal; the latter you were so good as to sign. We have likewise the mark of this pretty lady here.

Dem. Why this is the *lex talionis*, as we say, who study the law—eh, Mr. Wormwood?

Wit. Come, this is a day of general happiness. Much joy to you, Wormwood.

Dem. Mrs. Lucy, no doubt, acknowledges the validity of the contract?

Lucy. Certainly, Sir. We shall be married to-morrow, I hope, Mr. Wormwood? (*pertly.*)

Worm. Confusion!—But I may yet be revenged.

[*Exit.*

Sir P. Follow, girl, follow. It shall be my care to make him fulfil his engagement, or handsomely reward you. [Exit Lucy.

*Scene changes. Enter YOUNG HARCOURT and
LOVEMORE.*

Har. Will he meet me, think you?

Love. Why, 'faith, he long held back: but by dint of argument I brought him to accept your challenge—and, egad, here he is. Take these pistols; they contain nothing but powder.

Enter OLD HARCOURT.

Old H. How comes it, Captain Moreton, that under the mask of friendship—

Har. O, a very pardonable proceeding, Sir. I kept you ignorant of my affection for the lady, in the fear that, should I declare myself, you might counterwork me with Sir Peter. Stratagems in love are as allowable as stratagems in war; and that the latter are frequently practised, you, Sir, as a soldier, must consequently know. But this is not a time for talking. Let it suffice that I adore Melissa, and will maintain my pretensions to her with my life (*raises his hand*).

Old H. Hold, hold. I am not prepared—I have to offer up a prayer—

Har. Aye, aye; I understand.—A prayer to Heaven so to direct your hand that you may send a bullet into my head or heart.—Lovemore, measure the ground—

Old H. Well, but what's the hurry? If the thing can be explained, why—

Har. Explained! Impossible. Come, come; this is mere evasion: very unfitting—very unbecoming in a military man—your regiment will positively blush for you.

Old H. (aside.) He seems very desirous of sleeping in the *bed of honour*. 'Tis pity I never practised at a mark.

Har. No more of this delay. We must proceed to business.

Old H. Business!—

Har. Yes, Sir; I repeat it, business. An injury like this is not to be—

Old H. Injury! Why, zounds, I am the person injured.

Har. Are you? Then you shall fire first.

Old H. Fire first! I have no desire to fire first.

Har. No! Why, then I will. It's exactly the same to me.

Old H. Hold, hold. The devil's in the man. (*Aside to Love.*) What sort of a shot is he?

Love. Pretty sure. But never fear. (*Old H. points his pistol.*) Aye, aye, that will do; that will bring him down.

Har. Now, Sir! (*Old H. fires. Young H. falls as if shot.*) Oh! I am killed.

Old H. Tol de rol lol—tol de rol lol (*sings and capers about*).

Love. Ah, my dear Captain Moreton—

Har. I renounce that name—it was taken to serve a particular purpose, now defeated. Know me then as son of Charles Harcourt, of the county of Somerset, Esquire.

Love. Oh, Sir—your son, your son! you have killed your son!

Old H. Hey, how—my son!—what, Jack? No, no; this is an impostor—Jack is now in Bengal.

Har. No impostor, Sir. I am, indeed, your son—your poor unfortunate Jack.

Old H. Let me examine him nearer. Aye, aye; true enough. I now see his mother in every feature. Run, fly, for some assistance.

Har. 'Tis needless, Sir; altogether needless, I assure you.

Old H. But why an assumed name—why appear under that of Moreton?

Har. Question me not at this time, Sir. You will know the reason shortly.

Old H. Zounds! Lovemore, what could you mean by letting us fight?

Love. O dear, Sir, how you talk. What, interfere in an affair of honour, and before a shot had been exchanged?—impossible! Besides, with the name of Moreton, how should I know him for your son?

Old H. Affair of honour? Ridiculous! It would have done *you* honour, indeed, to have prevented bloodshed. Alas! alas! a father the murderer of his child.

Love. O, never make yourself uneasy, Sir—never be unhappy about it. Beside, I am sure it is all for the best.

Old H. Distraction! All for the best? What, to lose my boy; the boy, too, whom I so dearly loved—to lose him in so dreadful a manner!

Love. Yes, Sir, I repeat it—*All for the best*—consider the matter well. Had the first shot been his, you, in that case, might have fallen—“food for worms,” as the poet has it. Remember that. Beside, as Euripides so finely asks, “Is it not a glorious thing to live, and behold the light?”

Old H. But is it not shocking that a son should call his father to the field?

Love. Think no more of that—he must have been

ignorant of the relationship. There are many of your name. You stand acquitted in the sight of Heaven, I am sure.

Har. Indulge me, dear Sir, with a sight of my beloved ere I die.

“O, Sophonisba! Sophonisba, oh!”

Old H. Sophy Nisbet—who the plague is she? Another mistress?—

Har. Misery, misery (*pauses*).—Were you ever in a playhouse, Sir?

Old H. Playhouse? (*with astonishment*.)

Har. Yes, Sir; because, in that case, you doubtless recollect that the hero of every piece, whether tragedy or comedy, will—if by any chance he be *severely* wounded—always call for his mistress; address her in a long and florid speech—(very natural when a man is dying)—as thus—

“Since fate divides us then: since I must lose thee,
For pity’s sake, for love’s, oh! suffer me
To sigh my last adieu upon thy bosom.”

Old H. How wildly he talks! ’Tis very strange that he should think about playhouses, and heroes, and tragedies, now.

Love. Strange? Not at all, Sir. I shouldn’t be surprised if he were to compose a dozen or two of verses, and repeat them just before he expires.

Old H. Indeed! Is it possible?

Love. O, yes, Sir. You will never meet with this among the vulgar. But the souls of a certain description of men are cast in a very different mould from those of the commonalty.

Old H. Certainly, certainly. The magnanimity of the Harcourts was never questioned. A kind of heirloom, as I may call it. He! he! he!—

Love. Sir! your son, your son.

Old H. Gad! I forgot—

Har. Melissa—Melissa—O, that my father would but say she's mine. Bless me with sounds so ravishingly sweet—then should I die in peace (*in a whining tone*).

Old H. She is, she is—she shall be yours. (*Aside.*) I can promise it safely now.

Har. Say you so, good Sir. I take you at your word (*jumps up*).

Old H. Heyday—why, what the devil! You are not wounded then?

Har. Wounded! O, dear Sir, your kindness is a balm for every wound. (*Old H. stands seemingly astonished, with his eyes fixed on his son.*)

Har. How the old fellow must look when he discovers the cheat—eh, Sir?

Old H. Why, you impudent—(*holds up his cane.*)

Har. Nay, Sir, pray be civil—

Old H. Civil, you scoundrel—but under what pretence have you thus—

Har. O, a whim, a frolic.

Old H. A whim—a frolic!

Har. Yes, Sir. Concerted merely to give you an opportunity of showing your good nature—your love and regard for Jack.

Old H. Love and regard! you—a pretty figure I make here—a charming situation truly! Well, Sir, what money have you brought from India?

Har. Very little, indeed, Sir.

Old H. I am glad of it—heartily glad of it.

Har. I understand you, Sir—that you may have the particular satisfaction of affording me relief by a relinquishment of half your estate.

Old H. Hold, hold,—you are greatly mistaken. No, no,—that I may have the particular satisfaction of cutting you off with a guinea. Now you know your fortune.

Enter SIR PETER and LADY POSITIVE, and MELISSA.

Mel. 'Tis small indeed. But be it so. Mine, thank Heaven! is large enough for both. And if Captain

Harcourt, the true Captain Harcourt, is willing to become a sharer in it——

Har. My dear Melissa!——

Old H. Plague on it!—I am defeated every way.

[*Sir Peter and Lovemore talk apart.*]

Love. O, prithee think no more about it, Sir Peter:—a blunder of my servant's. There is, indeed, a lady to whom I was formerly rather particular, and he mistook——

Sir P. And the letter that Robert delivered to me, and addressed to Lady Positive, was really intended for Arabella?

Love. It was—on the word of a wholly reformed man.

Sir P. Enough, enough. I am content.

Lady P. Yes, yes, my dear—Mr. Lovemore's recantation is made.

Old H. Well, Sir Peter, what are we to do with this impudent fellow—this jackanapes, my son, who has been playing his pranks with us both?

Sir P. Say no more, say no more, Mr. Harcourt. He has occasioned some alarm to me: but I pardon him from my soul, and you must do the same.

Old H. Well, if I must——

Mel. This is kind, indeed! And permit me to assure you, Sir, that you will find to the full as much obedience from me in the character of daughter-in-law, as you would in that of wife.

Old H. (aside.) Quite as much, I dare swear.

Sir P. After all, Captain, I suppose it is I who am to find the rupees?

[*Young Harcourt bows.*]

Har. Now then I am supremely happy.—And as my father has kindly pardoned a device which was suggested to me by love, and love only, I shall hope to stand generally acquitted of any ill intentions in my late behaviour towards him; nor ever forfeit the good opinion of these my friends.

EPILOGUE.

LADIES! 'tis hoped you in our scenes discover
The way to lose (take heed!) a modish lover.—
“*Lose!*” cries each belle—“you quite mistake our skill, }
'Tis to *secure* such that *we use them ill.*”
“Indeed! is that your plan?” says Daffodil;
“Eh, how's this, Whiffle?” Whiffle straight replies,
(Grave as an owl),—’tis wisdom to *look* wise—
“Why, Daffy, we must counteract their schemes.”
“You counteract us! banish such fond dreams.
There's not a thinking man who'd ever pit
His *passive* sense against our *active* wit,
In few things failing. But for wiles in love,
To strive to foil us *there* would madness prove.”
So Naso thought,—great champion of the fair! }
Who bade us play off each coquettish air
On coxcombs;—baffled by such *ruses de guerre.* }
Learn then of him,—if not, of Arabella,—
Dear sisters! how to treat a *pretty fellow*.
“In heat or cold” (says he), “let Fopling wait;
From morn till eve,” (delightful!) “at your gate:
Then bid him quick begone.”—Illustrious Roman!
Thus tutor'd, Miss can play the “very woman.”*
“A *very woman*”—’tis express'd with force,
And means our sovereign sway—but *that's of course*;
For O, how charming 'tis to find one's power
Increasing with each month, week, day, nay hour!

A "lord of the creation" at one's feet,
Whining, "Divinest beauty, I entreat
One smile, or else this dagger."—Dear, how sweet! }
But if he'd kill himself, O, how much sweeter ;
And this he vow'd to do—the perjur'd creature !
'Twas child's play all—he only *made believe* ; }
So I, who hoped to *laugh*, was left to *grieve*. }
That there's no TRUTH in man, you all perceive. }
But to be serious : we have brought some arts
From school (and well-approved) to gain men's hearts ;
But now we must forego all antique rules, }
For, as the name implies, our *reticules* }
Are meant to catch, and captive keep the fools.— }
At least, Miss Conquest talks thus ; so I've betted,
That she more swains than Lovegold pounds has *netted*.

L A V I N I A.

A TRAGEDY.

IN THREE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEZENTIUS, King of Etruria.

LATINUS, King of Latium.

LAUSUS, Son of Mezentius.

MELANTHUS, Son of Latinus.

PHANOR, Friend of Lausus.

PHOCIAS, Favourite of Mezentius.

LAVINIA, Daughter of Latinus.

PHENISSA, Attendant of Lavinia.

Soldiers, Guards, Attendants, &c.

SCENE.—*A Camp.*

LAVINIA.

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

LAUSUS *and* PHANOR.

Phan. O, my loved prince! by Heaven, I joy to
see thee

Thus plumed with conquest; how will dread Mezentius
Rejoice to embrace a son so great in valour!

Laus. The pride of conquest hath for me no charms:
I who have conquer'd, am myself a slave.—
Short is my history. When our victorious arms
Had carried devastation through the city—
Good old Latinus then himself our prisoner—
The men elate with glory, highly purchas'd
By the dear blood of kindred and of friends,
Spurning all order that opposed their will,
From the king's bosom tore his beauteous daughter,
And dragg'd the youthful sorrower to my tent.
Hastily summon'd once more to the field,
I would on my return have freed the maiden,—
For oft with urgency and tears she ask'd it,
Wailing her aged father's hapless state,—
But they had borne her to Mezentius' camp,
Fondly pretending she would there receive
From the attendant females needful succour.
I lov'd her from the first.—

Beauty and grace ne'er shone more bright in woman.

From forth her eye in strong effulgence beam'd
Virtue and goodness. But I fear the king—
My father and my tyrant.

Phan. Has he then seen her?

Laus. He has: and I so oft have mark'd the force
Of beauty on his wild, tempestuous soul,
That much I tremble for the princess' safety.—
But see, she leaves her tent. Let us retire.
I must prepare, howe'er unwillingly,
To meet Mezentius and receive his greetings.

Phan. The meed, thy valour, princely Lausus, claims.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

LAVINIA comes from her tent, followed by PHENISSA.

Lav. Go, good Phenissa, leave me to my sorrows.
Society to me 's become as hateful
As is the thought of him who holds me captive.

Phen. Why will you, Madam, cherish thus affliction?
Why persevere to pass whole hours in mourning?
O, rather strive with fortitude to bear
Those ills which Heav'n alone can e'er alleviate.
Too well I know that you have cause for grief,
Despair still plays the tyrant in your bosom:
But calmer Reason will, I hope, succeed—
She ought to hold an empire o'er the heart,
And bid us hope even in our greatest sorrows.

Lav. Thus do they talk who never knew 'of sorrow.
Ah me! most wretched—

Phen. 'Tis true, Mezentius' arms have this 'day
conquer'd;
Yet think you, Madam, that the king your father
In safety lives—

Lav. Yes, yes, he lives, Phenissa—
Lives to endure a base, ignoble bondage!
Lives to endure the taunts, the vile reproaches
Of his inveterate foe—Mezentius.

E'en now a captive in his own domain,
He waits the nod of that imperious tyrant;
Who leads him forth, perhaps his soldiers' sport,
The butt of the rude rabble! My brother, too,
My dear Melanthus, is or slain or captive.
But much I fear he 's fallen. Too well I know
His bold and daring spirit ne'er would stoop
To any proffer'd terms of this fell tyrant.

Phen. I think so too:—your brother's dauntless soul
Would rather court a danger than avoid it.
But rumour speaks not of Melanthus' death,
Therefore conclude he lives—lives to assert
And vindicate an aged father's wrongs.

Lav. Nay, not his father's, but his country's wrongs,
Demand his vengeance now. Mezentius' cruel sword
Has carried devastation through the city,
Laid waste the country—made our people slaves;
And this to gratify his curs'd ambition.—
He has not e'en the plea most tyrants have,
Who say revenge for insult urg'd them on.
Not so with us;—ours has been tame submission,
A blind obedience to his haughty will.—
Our blessings were derived from Heaven alone;
Our griefs came all from him! O, my Phenissa!
When avarice and ambition once are join'd,
They know no bounds—no period to their conquests.
O grant, ye gods, if yet Melanthus breathe,
Grant him revenge for poor Latinus' wrongs,—
Revenge for bleeding Latium and her sons!
'Tis in her country's and her father's cause,
Eavinia humbly supplicates for justice.

Phen. Nor shall my royal mistress sue in vain:—
A nation's glory and a people's right
Demand the interposing aid of Heaven;
And sure it will be granted.

Lav. Most sure.—Yet say, Phenissa,
When next this hateful tyrant meets my view,
Say, how shall I receive him?

Phen. With looks complacent,
And with words of kindness.

Lav. How, Phenissa !

Phen. E'en so I would advise my royal mistress.
If you incense him, much he's to be dreaded.
Lions and tigers, unprovok'd, attack not ;
But, when we urge them to the dread encounter,
Both force and art must be employ'd against them,
And we, alas ! have neither.

Lav. But he, less generous than lions are,
And more inexorable far than tigers,
Has, unprovok'd, attack'd our sacred city.
No—the defenceless he will never spare.
I will not soothe him—no !
A truly Roman spirit fires my breast,
And he shall find, spite of this weight of woe,
I am a princess still.

Phen. O yet dissemble :
Pity,—mild beauty, whom we all revere,
Whose heavenly influence in this vale of tears
Makes gods of men !—Pity to him shall lend
Some portion of her grace : shall warm his bosom,
Shall teach him to behold no more unmov'd,
Virtue like thine.—

Lav. O how mine ear drinks in the dulcet sound !
But peace, no more !—
Yet filial virtue Heaven will deign to aid ;
And there my comfort lies ! As for this tyrant,
Whom nature in mistake has stamp'd for *man*,
Whose heart is steel'd against each gentler influence—
Think'st thou that Pity there can choose her seat,
A day, an hour ? 'twere madness to believe it.

Phen. O, ye immortal powers ! stretch forth your
arms,
Preserve her to us ! Let her live to tend—
To tend, as she was wont, her peerless parent ;
A parent bending with the weight of years,
And struck by dire misfortune's keenest dart.

Lav. I thank thee, gentle maid. It is for that—
In that sweet prospect still I wish to live,
To give him comfort;
The while, perhaps, destruction, though unheeded,
Scowls round our destin'd heads.

Phen. Thou canst not die, for Heaven's own arm
upholds thee!—

Lav. Prithee, no more.
You much distress me by this ill-timed praise.
It is sufficient that the heart finds joy,
In following nature's dictates. But tell me now,
If this our prison be the Etrurian camp?

Phen. Even so; and hither is Mezentius coming,
Flush'd by his arms' success—some few short moments,
And we shall meet the haughty monarch's glance.

Lav. O fatal tidings! doubly, doubly wretched!
A father and a brother lost by war,—
While—

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. Madam, the king.

Enter MEZENTIUS, PHOCIAS, Guards, &c.

Mez. Hail, beauteous mourner! the rude din of arms
At length suspended—lo! I come to greet you.
I bring no vain condolence for your sorrows,
But only grieve thy father is my foe.

Lav. Thy foe! say rather thou art his—an honest heart
Disclaims the impious name of foe to man;
He but defended his lov'd people's rights
Against a rude invader.

Mez. Less anger, Madam, better would become you—
You are not now within your father's palace.

Lav. True, tyrant, true. Oh, I indeed am fallen!

[*After a pause.*

Where is my father?—brother? No answer?
Slain, murdered! Tell me—is it so?

Phoc.

Princess, your royal father—

Lav. Peace, minion, I would hear it from thy master.

Mez. 'Madam, I pray you speak more calmly—
Did I not pledge my word upon his safety?

He but experiences the chance of war,
The frequent fate of soldiers. Be calmer, lady.

Lav. Well, tell me then, in what has he offended?

Mez. Denied what I, as from a subject state,
Of right might ask—supplies of men and money.

Lav. Shallow pretext! The annual tribute paid,
New imposts follow:

With these, unable longer to comply,
Fell usurpation comes with murderous fangs,
And all at once is ruin!

But tell me now, for what am I reserved?
For once be honest—let me know my fate.

Mez. Much earthly happiness awaits you, Madam:
You are no prisoner here. Be it my care
To see due honours paid you: honours such
As best become your princely birth and fortune.

Lav. Nay—nay; this is but insult—insult added
To give my wrongs a keener edge.—Thy proffer'd peace,
More fearful than thy vengeance, I despise—

Mez. Lady, 'tis well! the vengeance you despise
May yet o'ertake you; and your sinking house,
Spite of its pride, yet sue to me for peace—
The peace I shall deny.—

Lav. O, matchless hero!
That sett'st at once both gods and men at nought!

Mez. Ha! Then by Heaven these taunts shall be
repaid—

Lav. They're but imperfect heralds for thy crimes—

Mez. Away! Is this the language of a captive—
The language of a slave who waits my nod?
This insolence shall meet its due reward:
Yes, haughty fair one, thou shalt feel my power.
Thy father dies—

Lav. My father!

Mez. The daughter wills it so.

She who might save the last of Latium's kings,
Raises the falchion and directs the blow.

Lav. What means Mezentius? The last of Latium's
kings?

Is not my brother——

Mez. Thy brother fell in battle. For thy sire—
Thy mercy yet had spar'd his hoary head:
But thy intemperate speech has seal'd his doom.

Lav. Mercy! Mercy's of heavenly birth; how then
should she

Find entrance in a breast where vice still reigns?
I know thy heart; and this vain show of virtue
Makes thee most hideous in Lavinia's eyes.

Mez. Again these insults? (*Aside.*) Madness sure
has seiz'd her.

Enter a SOLDIER.

Sold. Mighty Sir, the prince——

Mez. Go, lead the princess to the camp.

Lav. Yet spare my father, king!

Mez. I give him to thy love.

Think to reward my kindness as becomes you.

[*Lavinia is conducted to a tent.*]

Enter LAUSUS and Train.

Mez. Lausus! most welcome to thy father's arms;
The service of this day deserves our thanks—
Thy country's thanks!

Thy valour shone conspicuous in the fight:
The glory of the field is all thine own.

Laus. Far be it, Sir, from me to claim such honours!
The meanest soldier shares it with his general;
I had fought better in a better cause.

Mez. Lausus, no more. To-morrow's sun shall rise
To add new splendour to your gallant deeds;
We do decree you a triumphal entry.

Laus. Yet spare me, Sir.

The splendid triumph would belie my feelings :
I mourn the havoc which my sword has made.

Mez. How, Lausus! mourn the downfall of our foe?

Laus. The good man, Sir, howe'er inured to arms,
However just his quarrel, still laments
The dire necessity that leads to slaughter,—
But when a different—

Mez. Lausus, this ill-timed language much offends me.
I never thought I task'd your duty highly,
When, with a father's fondness, I required
Your arm to guard my crown—the brilliant crown
Which I with so much care have kept from stain,
That it at length might grace thy martial brow.

Laus. (aside.) From stain!—O gods!—Your orders,
royal Sir,
Are all fulfill'd; Latium, and Latium's king,
Confess your power.

Mez. You speak not to the purpose. This evasion—
But you have said you mourn your father's conquests.
Degenerate son! But go! Away!

Laus. Pardon, Sir,
A fault which pity—

Mez. Pity? O weakness!
O, woman's word, and from a soldier's lips!
Why, what have mighty princes, fam'd in arms,
To do with such fond notions?

Laus. They most of all men.
Who can behold unmov'd, poor, tortur'd nature,—
Behold her bleedings? Slain by her own sons!

Mez. O foolishness of youth! Is this the firmness,
The stoic firmness I so oft have urg'd;
So oft inculcated as the great good,
The sov'reign good below?

Laus. You do mistake the stoic doctrine quite.
It would not steel our breasts against the ills
Which we behold in others. Only this,—
To bear with fortitude our own. Nor charge
The great gods with injustice.

Mez. Degenerate boy! But leave me now—thy
feeling softness
Would best be seen in Sybaris. It may infect
Etruria's warlike sons. Begone! I say.

[*Exeunt Lausus and Train.*]

Phocias! The fair Lavinia is thy charge.
Guard her with care, but still with all due honours.
Pass to our tent. We have a word or two
To greet thine ear withal, and only thine. [*Exeunt.*]

A TRIUMPH.

SCENE—THE CAMP.

LAVINIA comes from her Tent.

Lav. Ah! my loved father.—Would I knew his state.—
I have Mezentius' promise for his safety;
But what are promises when laws are spurned?
Vain and illusive all! Meant he no farther ill
To our unhappy house than that which war,
Wide-wasting war, already has brought on it,
Would he detain me here within this camp,
To waste my youth in sorrowing and in tears?
He asks not ransom for his feeble captive,
And yet denies the liberty I pant for.
What should I think? Advise me, gracious Heaven.

[*Phenissa comes forward.*]

O my Phenissa,—now my only solace!
Welcome, once more to these desiring eyes.
Wilt thou forgive the error of thy mistress,
When, press'd by misery, she lately strove
To banish thee, in harshness, from her presence?

Phen. My dear mistress——

Lav. Peace, peace.

I am the daughter of a king, and feel
My father's spirit kindling in my breast.
Ah, poor Latinus, wretched, wretched monarch!

Phen. Oh, how such piety and reverence show
In our poor nature! How do they emblaze it!

Some few examples, like to this so bright one,
Might reconcile me somewhat to the world—
That world, whose varied injuries so oft
I've felt, but still with fortitude have borne.
But is not that the prince, who this way bends
His hasty step? It is. I will retire, so please you.
[*Exit Phenissa.*]

Enter LAUSUS.

Laus. Madam, your pardon. I thought this tent——

Lav. Sir, you are master here; this tent, and all
Its gay appendages, by right are yours.
I the poor borrower only.

Laus. Royal lady,
I am the wretched author of your woes—
Too fatally I feel it.
Yet look not on me with so stern an eye.
Driv'n by a cruel father's harsh command,
In Latium's smiling plains I wag'd fell war:
Plains, by a wise and virtuous monarch made
The seats of commerce, and the nobler arts.
O, how unlike to our Etrurian wilds,
Where men and beasts divided empire hold,
And each alike ferocious!

Lav. Astonishment!
What magic sounds are these? Methinks I walk
In fabled regions. Do I hear aright?
Art thou Etruria's prince—Mezentius' son?

Laus. Too sure I am. Yet would to Heaven I were
not!

O cruel fate! O misery supreme!
I own, with shame, the man who calls me son.

Lav. So then, amid the honours that surround you,
The pride of victory, and the pomp of triumph,
You yet——

Laus. Triumph! ah spare me, gentle princess.

Lav. The victor's due—this meed thou seem'st to claim,
And this my justice grants, nor questions farther.

Laus. Thanks, royal lady! much I joy to find
You can believe the fierce Mezentius' son
E'er felt the touch of pity.

Lav. Virtue yet fairer shows when vice is by.
But I must learn to bear my ills with calmness.

Laus. This nobleness of soul, this stoic firmness,
This most unwomanly resolve—

Lav. Unwomanly? Ah me, the dubious, questionable
word!

Nay, leave this strain, or I may turn your praises
Into loud censure, and most keen reproach.
Unwomanly! O Prince, thou say'st most true;
This heart, grown callous, will no longer feel
For human ills:—a father's or a brother's—
Each, each alike unheeded.

Laus. More fortitude would better—

Lav. Sir, I am a woman.
In that one word I answer all upbraidings.

Laus. Upbraidings! Heavens! think not thus harshly
of me.

Yet grant me pardon, lady, when I say,
Your sight grown dim, through complicated sorrows,
Perceives not all the brightness that surrounds you.

Lav. You move my wonder, Sir—
A father and a brother lost, and yet
You hint at days of peace—at hours of pleasure!

Laus. The good Latinus, whom the neighb'ring states
(Our own excepted) ever held in reverence,
Though now a prisoner, through the stern decree
Of him I dread to speak of, shall from me
Receive those honours honour still must claim.
My first and chiefest care shall be to aid him,
E'en as I would a father.

Lav. Thanks, generous prince.
But that I know such homage would offend,
Kneeling I'd thank thee.

Laus. I have my reward
In your so kind opinion. O, might my love—

Lav. Sir!—

Laus. Yes, the most tender love that ever warm'd
The human breast, but heighten your opinion—
I were indeed most blest.

Lav. Is this a time for love!—romantic love,
To find a place within this full-swoln bosom?
Prince, I esteem your virtues: lessen not,
I pray you—lessen not, one point their value.

Laus. I will no more offend. Yet love like mine
Might well demand the fair Lavinia's favour.

Lav. Perhaps in other times, in happier fortunes,
She might have lent an ear to noble Lausus.
But recollect what bars are set between us:
Our houses' enmity by years rais'd up,
And not, I fear, by years to be appeas'd—
E'en at our utmost reck'ning.

Laus. I think not thus.
Mezentius, cruel though he be by nature,
Feels for me all a parent's fond affection.
Should he once know the passion of my heart,—
Should he once know the worth, the inborn worth
Of her who wakes that passion, he will own—
So do my hopes presage—my love well plac'd:—
Will own fierce enmity no more should rage
Betwixt our houses; but that peace, bland peace,
Should give to us, and to our war-worn people,
The joys which all must pant for, save himself.

Lav. Sir, to accuse the father to the son,
Were hateful practice, and is not for me.
I shall forbear all charge against Mezentius;
Suffice it, that he is our foe profess'd,
Irreconcilable, as I do think—
To build on such foundation sure were madness!

Laus. Princess! the love he bears me is the base—
The rock on which I build my dearest hopes:
That once destroy'd, his *justice* were as nothing;
A very shadow, such as fools alone
Could think to catch at. I would not flatter vice,

No, nor extenuate, in aught, its practice,
Though in a father or a brother seen.
You say, Mezentius is your foe profess'd ;
And right you say—he is a foe to man.
'Tis not your house alone, which has his hate ;
Each peaceful province in Hesperia's round,
By turns, has sorely felt it. Virtue excites—
As far too oft we find in human breasts—
His utmost malice, evermore, most deadly.
O monstrous baseness ! O degenerate man !
Who should to that bright beauty give support,
Yet spurn her from you, mixing scoffs and taunts.

Lav. Thus do you paint Mezentius, and your father !
Say then, can friendship dwell in such a bosom ?
The rooted malice you so well describe
Seems nature in him. Who can forego his nature ?
Who can divest himself of all the strong,
The innate propensities which grow and mantle
Even with our growing age ? It will not be !

Laus. With souls like his, whose first great spring's
ambition,
Much may be compass'd, set but gain in view.
His conquests still hang doubtful : ill secur'd,
For yet the warlike Latians keep the field.
Could we confirm one half of those domains,
Which my so justly dreaded father asks,
To him and to his house, 'twere all sufficient,
(And Turnus' sister, whom he wished my wife,
But whom I ne'er could love, he'd think no more of.)
Our families united, good Latinus
Takes for his portion straight the other half.
Thus do we give to our lov'd people peace ;
And O, sweet lady ! let me not offend,
If I do add,—much joy unto ourselves.

Lav. Joy, Sir, I have lost !—But you were in the
fight.

You saw him sink, perhaps ? Who gave the blow ?
Sure by no mean or worthless arm he fell ?

Laus. Ah, wretched, doubly wretched that I am!
this hand—

Lav. Horror, horror! The murderer of my brother
Would be my husband. Let me not hear again
The dreadful sound. Away! we part for ever.

Laus. Call me not murderer! Princess, I am a soldier;
And 'tis a name of honour. The brother you deplore
Own'd it, and gloried in the high distinction!

Lav. Forgive me, Sir! The anguish of my heart
Has near destroy'd my reason. Melanthus' death
Was but the chance of war. But still that death
Came from the hand of Lausus. We must part!

Laus. I bow to fate. Your will shall be my law.
Our union would have given the good Latinus
The peace and comfort he so greatly needs.
But still his safety shall be all my care;
And if Mezentius can for once know mercy,
Straight shall thy father greet thee with his love,
In freedom's goodliest shape.

Lav. Godlike man!—
But go! such virtue cannot have requital
On this side heaven. I'll not attempt to thank thee,
Words are too weak—too poor! I pray you leave me.
Go! soul of honour. Be thou ever happy.

[*Exit Lausus.*]

Manet LAVINIA.

To me, alas! new source of endless pain.
Lausus would gain my hand. Who could refuse
To so much honour fair return of love?
Lausus would be the means, the glorious means,
To free an aged king from hard captivity;
That king her father; who could pause one moment?
But Lausus gave the death-blow to Melanthus,
And who could wed the slayer of her brother?
O, where shall I find ease? There's no relief!
I must be wretched, and I should be patient.
Rare sophistry! That were indeed most brave.

[*Phenissa comes forward.*]

Madam, the king is soon expected here.

'Twere best that you retire.

Lav.

Save, hide me from him !

[*Goes to her tent.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Enter LATINUS, attended by TWO SOLDIERS.

Lat. Once more you lead me from the darksome cave,
'The cave of death ! These eyes, grown dim with age,
Can ill endure the piercing rays of light.

But why brought hither ? Why of me this care ?

Sold. Your royal daughter, Sir, the fair Lavinia,
And good as fair, implored it of the king,
The victor king—

Lat. O wretched, wretched Latium !

Sold. Great Sir, forbear these complaints. Your people
still—

Such is the force of loyalty and love—

Defend your kingdom 'gainst the unmatched power
Of proud Mezentius—

Lat. Ah ! is it really so ? will they once more
Make head, and stem oppression ? I thought ill fortune
Had quite subdued their spirit. Great Jove, I thank
thee !

O, were my boy !—He fell, you say, in battle ?

Sold. By Lausus' arm he fell.

Lat. Ill-fated youth !

But did he fall inglorious ? No, I saw him

Long in the field, like Mars in all his terrors,

Deal death at every blow. Then wherefore weep ?

'Tis past, and nature yields to tyrant honour.
I'll weep no more! Now am not I a hero?

Sold. A great one, Sir.

You love your people and would live for them.
The gods will well reward you.

Lat. Most sure I love them. Yet thus captive, chain'd,
How should I ever give them needful succour?

Sold. Your daughter, Sir, through whose persuasive
influence

You gain the indulgence here to sit and taste
The wholesome air, blowing thus sweet from heaven,
Will quickly,—for who feels not beauty's power?—
Procure you full release.

Lat. No more, no more, Thy medicine is as poison.
It doth infect me like the hemlock's juice,
Or deadly aconite. My soul grows sick,
When I but think upon her fatal beauty.
Beauty than wealth will sooner rouse dishonour.
O dreadful truth! O miserable father!
But tell me, then—you think my daughter's beauty
May well become the ransom for my freedom?

Sold. Royal Sir!

Fashion not thus my words. I only think
Her goodness and her beauty well might move
The haughty victor to this generous act;
At once to give you peace and liberty.

Lat. Mezentius is my foe, my direst foe,
And I hope not his favour, nor desire it.

[*At some distance.*

Enter LAVINIA and PHENISSA.

Lav. See, see. Phenissa, where the good old king
Sits motionless and sad.

He seems to ruminate on hardships past,
Yet, ever and anon he turns his eyes,
Grateful to Heaven that all is not yet lost.

Sold. Royal Sir! the princess—

Lav. My dear, dear father !

[Throws herself at his feet.]

Lat. Lavinia, my poor daughter ! How fares my child ?

Lav. Well, very well.

I have, in truth, no ill but that which springs
From apprehensions for your safety, Sir.

Lat. Your looks bespeak, indeed, a troubled mind.

I, too, am well, and have no other sorrows
(Since my brave people still maintain the field)
But those thy captive state may well awaken.
But say, Lavinia, art thou harshly treated ?
I hope some small respect is shown my child ?—
Her birth not quite forgotten ;

Lav. Most sumptuously

Is poor Lavinia lodg'd. It nothing charms me.
But princely Lausus—(favour'd of the gods!)
Order'd the gay equipments.

Lat. That prince, my daughter,
Might well atone for all his father's vices.

Lav. O, he is all—but then he slew Melanthus !
You knew not that, Sir ? We must learn to hate him.

Lat. Talk not thus—

I know from whom thy brother had his death,
Yet never thought on hate. 'Twas Mars' decree.
My boy fell gloriously. I scarce lament
His fate, though much I lov'd him. *[Trumpet sounds.]*
But hark, Mezentius comes,
Straight bear me to my prison.

[Exeunt Latinus and Lavinia severally.]

Enter MEZENTIUS, PHOCIAS, &c.

Mez. Go ! seek Lavinia. Tell that haughty beauty,
Mezentius asks some little conference with her.
Well, Phocias ! dost thou think this captive fair one
May yet be brought to listen to my love ?

Phoc. Sir, were the prince, your son (who seems averse
From her you long since chose to be his bride), were he—

Mez. Ha! thou hast mark'd him then?—
Were he but absent, *hope* might well be mine:
Is it not so?

Phoc. Such were my thoughts, dread Sir;
I fear he *loves* where you would have him pay
Simply respect and duty.

Mez. Cursed chance,
That brought her first within his tent! For Lausus' sake
(And that I love him, witness, all ye gods!)
I would forego much earthly happiness;
But passion sways me with imperious power.
I am not master of myself when beauty
Appears in such full radiance, such effulgence,
As that Lavinia owns. But see! my conqu'ror comes.

[*Enter LAVINIA.*]

So, Princess! hast thou ponder'd on my kindness?
Thought on the high reward that king may claim,
Who to his captiv'd foe such great indulgence
Grants—as thou know'st I've granted to thy father?

Lav. King! I can only thank you with my tears;
Nought else have I to give. A poor acknowledgment
For such *high* service.

Mez. By Heav'n, she mocks me still!
Madam, the haughty and contemptuous language
Which you so lately us'd—waking my anger,
Which still I lull'd, regardful of your sex—
Must not again blaze forth intemperate,
Or I shall quick relapse, and punish where . . .
My wish is to show mercy, nay, affection.

Lav. Ha! do I rightly hear? *Affection*, say you?
The good gods yet defend us!

Mez. She foils me ever.

Phen. (aside.) O powerful virtue!—great within thyself,
Nor borrowing aid from aught. He shrinks before her,
E'en as the fiend of hell before the bright
Celestial hierarchies, the empyréal band;
Angelic, when to confront them he had dar'd

In bold and impious battle; thereby waking
The heavenly Father's just and direful anger.

Mez. Since all my offers are thus cheaply held,
And I not even thank'd for what is priz'd
In other men, I'll be again a king.
Soon shall you feel my vengeance.

Enter a SOLDIER.

Sold. Pardon, dread Sir, my boldness. But as I
pass'd
The western camp, a stranger I descried,
Loitering and peering round with curious eye.
Soldier he seems, and noble: though attired
In meanest guise. Your faithful guards secured him,
And now without he waits your royal pleasure.

Mez. Quick, bring him to our presence.

[*Enter STRANGER.*]

Say, who art thou, that thus, like a base spy—
Although thy haught demeanour speaks thee other—
Wander'st our tents among? What thy designs?

Strang. Not base, as thou dost think. I come to
seek——

Lav. Ah me! that well known voice. 'Tis he, 'tis he!

Mez. She swoons, by Heaven! some minion lover.
Say on—Thou com'st to seek the fair Lavinia?

Strang. Rightly. you judge; such was indeed my
errand.

Mez. In hope, perchance, to steal her from our camp?

Strang. Again you think aright; such was my hope.

Mez. (to *Phocias*.) Proudly he answers; but yet
honestly.

Dar'st thou, since bold thou seem'st, make known thy
name?

Know'st thou the power of him who now confronts thee:
His character how terrible?—

Strang. Truth from thy lips!
Aye, king! full well I know it. Thou art most dreaded,

(So terrible thy character) by all
The fair Italian states.

Mez. I understand the taunt.

Thy name, stern boy ?

Strang. Melanthus, mighty king.

Ha ! does it gall thee, tyrant ?

Mez. Gall me ? Great gods,

Receive my warmest undissembled thanks.

This, this is triumph ! thou hast escaped the sword
To perish manlier by the axe's edge.

It will demand some firmness, pretty prince.

Mel. Ungenerous scoffer ! But my life's secure.

Mez. Bear him to instant death.

[*Lavinia rushes from her tent.*]

Lav.

Fear'd Mezentius—

O give him to my love ! O spare him, spare him ! (*kneels.*)

Mel. My sister ! But such goodness must not stoop
To so great baseness (*raises her*). Now listen to me,
king.

This morning was thy younger son surpris'd,—

With his whole squadron sent to reconnoitre,—

By my attending cohort. Straight was he borne

To the interior camp ; while I secure,

By this his capture, hastened to your tents

In search of my dear relatives. Know then, the hour

That gives me death brings the like fate to him.

Such was my latest order.

Thy love of him is great ; and that I build on.

Say, am not I in safety ?

Mez.

Ha ! is this true ?

Sold. Most true, my sov'reign liege. We fear'd to
inform you

Too suddenly of this disastrous stroke.

Mez. Ah, wretched monarch ! Misérable father !

Is this thy triumph ? This thy mighty conquest ?

Lav. So, great Mezentius, thou art caught at last—

Mel. Strike off my father's chains—no more torment
him,

Or every evil thou inflict'st shall fall,
With double force, upon thy young son's head.

Mez. Gods! Braved by this—

Enter MESSENGER, hastily.

Mess. Hail, mighty king! I come—

Mez. Away! away! I cannot now attend—

Mess. The prince, your son, is—

Mez. What! have they murder'd him?

Mess. Your son is rescued, Sir. His army saw,
From off the height on which it lay encamp'd,
The Latian cohort seize him:—far too distant they
To give him needful aid. But from our main body
A strong detachment, foraging, fell in
With this same cohort. They engag'd it straight,
Put it to flight, and now within his tent
The prince is safely plac'd.

Mez. (*Looking indignantly at Melanthus.*) The gods
still favour me.

Now bear him to his fate.

Lav. Mezentius! Prince! Oh—

Mez. What wouldst thou, scoffing beauty?

Lav. I am no scoffer;

I am all meekness, all humility.

Do thou, then, be all merciful, and spare

My dear, good brother—Mercy, mercy, king!

Mez. So, then, calamity at last has bow'd thee,—
Thy haughty spirit lowers to base Mezentius?

Lav. 'I am a princess, Sir—

Yet grant my present prayer, and I'll become

A mean, base, grovelling wretch; and do you ho-
mage.

(*Aside.*) What have I said? Oh abject, abject woman!

Phoc. (*to Mezentius.*) Comply with her request, Sir;
kindness will o'ercome

Sooner than harshness.

Mez.

Well, princess, I will try
Once more to gain your favour. On your demeanour,

Your father's and your brother's lives depend.
Captain (*to one of the guard*), he is your prisoner.

[*Exeunt Mezentius and Train.*]

Lav.

Dear Melanthus!

To what kind stroke of fortune do I owe thee?
Lausus reported thou hadst fall'n in battle.

Mel. Lausus o'erthrew, and wounded me severely;
To death as he imagined. Long time I lay
Senseless upon the field. The fight concluded,
Some wanderers of our party haply found me.
Borne to the camp, and due assistance given,
I speedily recover'd.

Lav.

Blessed chance!

Soon will I lead thee to our honour'd father:
But first I must, by due degrees, prepare him
For this unhop'd event—(for sudden joy
Sometimes, like grief, is fatal). That once done,
Thy presence will revive his drooping spirits.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter MEZENTIUS and PHOCIAS.

Mez. This contumacious boy!
Thus to reject brave Turnus' lovely sister,
Knowing her worth—nay, knowing that such union
Is now to me become most momentous,
By making the Rutulian king my friend.
My fast confederate. Youth! thou mayst presume
Too far upon my love. O, you are timely come.

[*Enter LAUSUS and PHANOR.*]

Lausus,—report informs, that our great enemy,
With newly-levied forces, means to brave us,
Maugre his late defeat. Therefore, my wish is,
That you, with your prime legion, straight repair
To the frontiers, where the Latian army lies.
Watch well its motions. Nor presume to quit
That station, till you farther learn my pleasure.

[*Lausus bows.*]

So, Phocias! In his absence, we may well
Pursue our plan.

Phoc. Prompted by great ambition,
And by still greater love, success shall crown
Your every project.

Mez. Lausus, you know our wishes.

[Exeunt Mezentius and Phocias.]

Laus. O Phanor, I am lost! Mezentius' orders
Are but to part me from the fair Lavinia;
Since on the borders lies our greatest force.
What should I do? To sue to him were vain.
I'll not obey. Lelius shall forthwith march
This chosen legion to its destin'd station,
While I, conceal'd without the city's walls,
May, with thy aid, defeat the king's intents;
Which, if I rightly guess, point to the princess.

Phan. Most surely so.

Laus. Thou, Phanor, mayst by letter
Inform me of what passes. Mark my father,
In every step, with nicest observation.
Perhaps my fears are groundless.—But if true,
I'll boldly stand before him; plead my love,
And hazard his displeasure, though it crush me.

[Exeunt.]

Enter MELANTHUS and LAVINIA.

Mel. O, my lov'd sister, what a day of woe!
To meet thee thus within Mezentius' power,
Inflames my soul, and kindles me to madness—
Shows me the horrors which invade thy state,
And magnifies each other sense of danger.

Lav. Ah! danger saidst thou? Is he not content
To rob the parent of his honour'd offspring?
To lay in waste whole cities—nay, whole nations,
Regardless of the cries of injur'd innocence?
Has he not princes to adorn his triumph?
What would he more?

Mel. He would have thee, my sister.

Lav. Why, has he not?
Do I not bear the servile yoke with patience?
Has he not me to grace his captive train?

Mel. He would have you his queen, to grace his throne;
And if a father's life—

Lav. And art thou come a suppliant for him—
He who has trampled on us and our house?
To woo thy sister to this tyrant's bed?
Think'st thou, Lavinia then can be that wretch,
To wed the avow'd destroyer of her race?
Can hardship ever make me swerve from virtue?
No! Virtue taught me to support affliction,
And make ills, mighty in themselves, seem less.

Mel. Think not, Lavinia, I could urgè a suit
Which, well I know, thy nature must abhor,—
But that a father's safety asks compliance,—
But that—

Lav. No more—away! And leave me to my fate.

Mel. Then must our father die?—

Lav. Ha! Sayest thou, die?

Mel. Yes, miserably perish—Murder'd! So, e'en now,
I was signified by Phocias.

Lav. If he must die—[*After a pause.*
Now, on my life, I think he rather would,
Than have his child dishonour'd.—But thou, Melanthus.

Mel. Add not distraction to my troubled thoughts.
Heaven knows how much I hate this foe to man.
Heaven knows how much I love thee, dear Lavinia:
Knows my affection for our honour'd parent—
Knows that to save his life—

Lav. You'd yield your own.
Why, so would I, Melanthus—but you ask
More than my life—then judge if I can grant it.

Mel. Thy fortitude, my sister, equals hers
Who died to save a Roman name from scorn.
My ardent zeal in our lov'd father's cause
Made me forget thy heaven descended virtues.
Pardon, Lavinia, pardon me my error.

Lav. And is there then no way to save our father?
O, I will fly and kneel before Mezentius,
Nor rise until his breast is moved to mercy.

Mel. Impossible! as well mightst thou attempt
To still the waves, when the wild winds are loose,
As his insatiate fury.—He knows not Mercy,
Nor in this camp moves one who owns her power.

Lav. Oh yes, my brother, surely there is one
Who knows her gentle sway—with transport knows it;
One—but that mercy here's esteem'd a crime—
Would gladly own it.

Mel. You speak of Lausus.
The fight concluded, we no more are foes;
I grant his merit freely.

Lav. But oh, our honour'd sire!—
Go hasten to him, and make known the will,
The dire decree of this barbarian prince:
And he will tell thee how I ought to act.
Go—and as he determines, judge of me. *[Exit Mel.]*

LAVINIA, sola.

And shall he die? I cannot bear the thought!
(After a long pause.)
No, I will save him yet—my heart's resolved.

[Enter PHENISSA.]

Phenissa! thou art here when most I need thee!
Repair thee to Mezentius, and inform him
Lavinia is subdued. Bid him release
My father instantly. Tell him, that done,
I swear by yonder heaven no more to oppose
His high imperial will.

Phen. Oh, yet consider—

Lav. Begone!—the die is cast. Now, Heaven, assist
me! *[Exeunt severally.]*

Enter LATINUS.

Lat. My son alive? then am I once more king.
Now, my brave people, watch for great revenge.

[Enter MELANTHUS, guarded.]

Ah me, in chains!—I thought he had escaped
Mezentius' power?—Farewell my gaudy prospects!
All in the hunter's snares!—Remorseless fate!

Mel. My honour'd father!—

*[Throws himself at the feet of Latinus,
and kisses his hand.]*

Lat. Melanthus, my dear boy!—
Again we meet—but oh the wretched plight!
Thus manacled, thus shackled—I would be calm;
But when I think on my Lavinia's state,
Thrice-lov'd Lavinia, round beset with dangers,
My slumbering griefs are instantly uprōus'd,
While horrors, such as Hecate's self might bring,
Swim in my sight unceasing. *[Turns from him.]*

Mel. Oh, how shall I
Make known the dreadful tidings—

Lat. What tidings, boy?
Come, speak them boldly. Misery has not a dart,
No, not an arrow left to wound me further.

Mel. Then hear the worst. Mezentius has propos'd
To my dear sister, marriage—sworn most solemnly
The day that gives her to him, gives to you
Both peace and freedom.

Lat. And she, lost girl, consents?

Mel. Rejects him with unprecedented scorn.

Lat. That's great: that's very great.

Mel. But when you know the terms—

Lat. Talk not to me of terms—'twas nobly done!

Mel. But oh, my father, death awaits you straight,
Unless Lavinia yield—Mezentius swore it,
Swore it by all his gods! And yet thy daughter
Stands like a rock unshaken.

Lat. That's greater still.

Mel. How awful virtue! I tremble, yet admire—
But still this must not be: my father's life
Shall not, thus prodigal, be thrown away.

Lat. Melanthus, hear me. I command your silence!
If thou suggest a thought to this dear girl,
Tending one jot to shake her resolution,
Thou art no more my son. I will deny thy birth:
Proclaim thee for a traitor: while my curses,
Thick as the hail-drops in the vernal storm,
Shall fall on thy base head.

Mel. (after a pause.) O heaven and earth!
Then, Sire, I will obey thee as thy son.

Lat. Why, that's well said.
Now thou art worthy of me and thy princedom.
I pardon thee thy error; go seek Lavinia,
And be to her a father. Let me not see
Nor thee nor her again.

Mel. Oh ye gods!—I cannot answer him.

[*Exit. Latinus retires.*]

ACT III.

*Enter MEZENTIUS, with a letter in his hand, followed by
PHOCIAS.*

Mez. Go, seize this bold offender, who has strove
To circumvent my purposes, thus basely
Aiding a rebel son against his father—
Phœcias! this letter, for the prince intended,
States that Lavinia has confess'd her love:
That Lausus has it all, no fear 'twill change.
The news to me is dreadful—most afflictive;
It blasts all hopes both for myself and him;
For Turnus thus despis'd, from a fast friend
Will soon become my foe,—my fellest foe.
I know his temper well——

[*Enter PHANOR.*]

So! presumptuous youth,
Were not my orders, that from forth the city
No messenger should pass to Lausus' camp,
Unless by me directed?

Phan. Such, indeed, they were.

Mez. Wherefore this letter, then?

Phan. My friend enjoin'd it,
Requested it at parting.—I am not yet
So well instructed in the world's fine manners,
To disregard the injunctions of my friend.

Mez. Insolent boy! Thy friend? Is this thy language!
Dost thou speak thus of Lausus, of my son?

Phan. He bade me know him by no other name:
Nor have I learnt to disobey the man
Who honours me so greatly.

Mez. I like thy spirit,
And will, if trusted, be thy truest friend.—
You mention here some plan in Lausus' favour,
Some scheme from which you hope the best success
Respecting my fair captive. Make known to me
The whole of this your project, and then think
In what I most can serve you.

Phan. Betray my friend?
O never will I thus my pledge dishonour!
Bound in the sacred ties of love and friendship
I hold him dear to me as mine own being:
For, from our younger days we were but one;—
It I desert him now, may fear and shame
Haunt me, like furies, to the gloomy grave,
Nor leave me e'er at rest. No! Heaven be witness!
And so deal with me as I keep my vow!—
I would not break these ties to wear a crown;
No, not to save my life.—(*Aside*) Although I hate
This impious tyrant who can tempt me thus.

Mez. This stubbornness thou mayst, perhaps, repent.
Back with him to his prison! Three hours I grant thee
To think on what I offer; that time elaps'd,
Shouldst thou remain unchang'd, thy guerdon's death.

Enter CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD. •

Capt. Dread Sire! as you commanded, our fair captive,
Attended by her brother, waits your pleasure.

Mez. Bring them before us—Now, Phocias, we shall triumph.

Enter MELANTHUS and LAVINIA.

Mel. O king! behold calamity's fell ravage.
See, where the poor Lavinia, quite distraught,
And lost in grief-grown madness, claims your pity.

Mez. Sorrowing, I see her!

Lav. • Who talks of sorrowing?
I thought that privilege belong'd to me,
And me alone! I deem'd I had put down
Grief from her seat, ay, quite usurp'd her throne.
Come, come, 'tis even so. *A queen* you'd make me?
Why, Sirs, I am a queen, a mighty queen!
Dispute my power, who dares? grief reigns supreme!
Nay, nay, 'tis useless struggling. There, I have him!
Ha! ha! ha! Bind, bind him hard, my friends;
The tyrant thinks to conquer—conquer me?—
Presumptuous man! No, not ten thousand fiends
Could e'er subdue Lavinia; great Lavinia!
The wan successor of that potent sovereign
Whom she so cunningly deposed. 'Twas artful!
Now, now, 'Tisiphone! that's bravely done!
He'll not recover it. That stroke unsouls him.
Lash, lash me too: I well deserve your scourge;
But spare my father, brother—

Mel. My sister!

Lav. Who art thou? Ah! I know thee—
Thou art Melanthus, my dear loving brother,
Who'd place me on a high imperial throne—
God-like Mezentius' throne.—Thou art most kind.

[*Melanthus attempts to take her by the hand.*
Hold; you presume too far—think on my greatness!

I must be knelt to, as befits my state,
 Not thus approach'd, familiar—pray observe this.
 Come, come, my robes—my gay imperial robes!—
 You trifle with me. Quick!—My brother's slain;

[*Goes up to Melanthus.*

And my dear father in a dark, dark dungeon,
 Drags out his wretched life. But what of that?
 I am an empress.... Happy, happy woman!—
 So now, my maidens, deck me gorgeously:
 Who shall, when all my bravery's on, dispute?—
 Peace, peace; no war! 'Tis a most dreadful thing.

[*Runs off.*

Mez. Follow, and watch her closely.—Be it my care
 To send the best and speediest succour to her.

[*Exeunt Melanthus and Lavinia on one side,
 Mezentius on the other.*]

LAUSUS enters alone, in disguise.

Laus. Phanor imprison'd; and myself the cause!
 His life in danger, too! Now comes my trial.
 Now, Lausus, 'twill be seen what stuff thou'rt made of.
 But to my task,—if task it can be call'd
 That would from forth a dungeon's horrid gloom
 Draw my much honour'd friend; my youth's companion.
 Hallo! who keeps the watch there? (*Soldier appears.*)

Say to Phanor,
 The man who loves him most, and whom he loves,
 Requests admission straightway to his prison.

Sold. Follow me, stranger, I'll conduct you thither;
 Your sympathy may smooth the road to death. [*Exeunt.*

Scene changes, and discovers PHANOR in a dungeon.

Phan. O hard, yet glorious struggle! But 'tis past.
 I bend to amity, and death's my portion.
 But then I die for Lausus; unbetraying
 The prince who trusted me in all, not doubtful—
 There is my boast!

Enter LAUSUS.

Laus. Phanor! my friend, my valued, well-tried friend!

Phan. My prince! this visit is indeed most kind.

Laus. Perhaps thou mayst have cause to say so, Phanor,
When thou shalt know what brought me to thy prison.
I come not to bewail your hapless state,
But give you instant freedom—

Phan. Freedom! the king
Feels then at length compassion. But why disguis'd?
What means your present garb?

Laus. 'Tis meant for thee.
Exchange with me your habit, and flee hence
With Atalanta's speed. In this attire
Safe may you pass the guard.

Phan. Sir, your wishes
Have till this moment been to me commands.
But then no hint, no word escaped from Lausus
That might affect my honour. Phanor sure has swerved
From the right road he had so long pursued
That thus you practise on him. If not so,
'Tis cruel and unfriendly!

Laus. Phanor, thy goodness,
Thine innate virtue, has been well approv'd.
None can impeach it by the smallest question.
Thine honour is an Ægis, often tried,
Yet still impenetrable—still resisting
The shafts of hatred, malice, and deceit.

Phan. Then why degrade me in the present hour?
When I might rise superior to my fate,
Why thus abase and crush me, unoffending?

Laus. Honour's true point, my friend, you touch not now.
Something you owe your prince; and his commands,
Unless they're tyrannous, should be complied with.

Phan. What you command is tyrannous, most ty-
rannous!
Shall I cast out all honour from my heart?

Laus. Come, come, these scruples—this nice show of
honesty,

Must now be laid aside. I claim a part—
 The sad particular which now affects us,
 Springs but from error only. Phanor should think
 That Lausus ne'er could ask, nor e'en suggest,
 Aught that might taint his honour.

Phan. I stand reprov'd.—
 Yet might I know the—

Laus. Inquire not, but obey me.

Phan. Ye gods, instruct me in this trying moment;
 Teach me, O teach me, how I ought to act.—[*After a pause.*
 I yield me to my prince.

Laus. Now, thou'rt again my friend.
 Lead me to th' inner cave: we'll there change habits.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene changes, and enter LAVINIA and PHENISSA.

Phenissa attending at some distance.

Lav. Thou all-seeing Power,
 Let not the fatal resolution by me taken—
 Unhappy that I am! and set around
 With dangers imminent; with snares most deadly—
 Let not my crime offend thee to unforgiving,
 Though 'gainst thy sov'reign will it militates.
 A crime! since by this act I save the life
 Of him I hold most dear, it may perchance
 Be deem'd akin to virtue. There is my hope,
 The lone, and storm-tossed anchor of my rest—
 Away, then, with all pause: I doubt no longer.
 O save me, save me!—My Phenissa, hasten.

[*Phenissa comes forward.*

See, where perdition, following at my heels
 With all her hell-hounds, hems me closely in—
 See where Mezentius comes in all his terrors—
 I cannot; will not, yield me! Slaves, let go
 Your hateful hold—I am Latinus' daughter:
 A princess, and your mistress. Oh, my brain!—

Phen. Dear lady, wherefore do you leave your tent?
 Let me entreat you to retire to rest,
 For wholesome rest will bring you sure relief.

Lav. Thou counsell'st well, Phenissa. Rest! Relief!
Long have I sought them: they'll ere long be mine.
Rest, rest eternal, is what I now seek.
But shall I find it? Ha! again new doubts?
But is there hope for me? Alas! none, none.
Can I know peaceful change? oh, never more.
No time for further thought. Be firm, my heart!
And no less firm my hand! This dagger saves me!
[Exit, followed by Phenissa.]

Enter LATINUS, followed by PHOCIAS.

Lat. O shame, shame, shame! Lavinia wed Mezentius?
It cannot be: thou dost belie her grossly.

Pho. Her full consent is given. The nuptial rites,
Will, ere to morrow's sun in Thetis' bed
Descends to rest, be solemnized with grandeur,
And all the pomp the great occasion calls for.

Lat. O, monstrous foulness! Matchless, matchless
crime!
Would my good sword were lodg'd within her bosom,
To save her from the sure, the certain infamy,
Which follows such an act.

Pho. This warmth's unseemly, Sir.
Think on the man who weds her: on his greatness.

Lat. Greatness! just Heaven! what! he whose mur-
derous hands
Are deep imbrued in my poor brother's blood?
While the lov'd son of that great monarch,—shackled,
And in a noisome dungeon closely pent,
Petitions, vainly, for the stroke of death,
To ease him from his woes? Greatness? Oh, horror!

Pho. These princes, Sir, were my dread master's foes;
Had they been conquerors, he no doubt had felt
The like severities with those you speak of.

Lat. Impossible!
Princes who know their duty and high place
Are never base destroyers—murderers—villains.

Pho. This is harsh language towards the king, who seats
Your daughter on his high imperial throne.

Lat. (aside.) Matchless effrontery! How am I reduced!

Pho. But soon this enmity will lose its force.

I grant, Mezentius is too prone to battle;
That war has hitherto engross'd his soul,
E'en to a vice; but 'tis the vice of heroes—
You are all mildness, all benignity,
A patriot king!—Italia's pride and glory!
By your example taught, this furious warrior
Will learn the arts of peace, while bending nations
Shall bless the union which to them has brought
Such truly happy times.

Lat. Away, thou sycophant!
Thy flattery suits not with my present ills:
I'll not accept it, though full well I know
There are who buy it at no trifling cost.
Go—Bear it to them, where thy reward is certain.

Pho. (aside.) Poor king! Misfortune breeds in him
these humours,

These cynic manners—Sir, I would be your friend.

Lat. When I shall wish thy friendship, I will ask it:
No need for further proffer.

Pho. 'Twere better than my hate:
Thou mayst repent thee, monarch, of this language.

Lat. Quick, hie thee to thy master—plan some means
To wound me in a tenderer part than that
Thou hast already struck on. Monsters, ye cannot!
I am invulnerable now—ay, and can stand
Against your sharpest arrows, undefended.

Pho. Since thus you treat the man who hoped to serve
you,

It were indeed most fit he took his leave.
Farewell!—I go to greet your lovely daughter,—
She better knows than you a kingdom's value.

Lat. (solus.) To greet my daughter! Is she then my
daughter?

Or has a trick been play'd me by the nurses

Putting some base-born bantling in the place
Of my loved offspring?—Ha! that well may be.
Yet when I think on every action past,
From her youth upward till this fatal moment,
I must reject these thoughts—reject them wholly.
But then, this base,—this dastardly degeneracy,
This worse than robbery, sacrilege, or murder!
O, I am lost in doubt!—Once more I'll see her.
Perhaps this wretch, this Phocias, wrongs my child.
I know his envious heart is prompt to mischief.
Straightway I'll be resolved. Suspense is torture!

[*Exit.*

**Enter MEZENTIUS, attended.*

Mez. This heaviness, this gloom which hangs about me—
What should it mean? I cannot shake it off,
Although to-morrow makes Lavinia mine:
Beauteous Lavinia, sought with so much care.
Go, bid the aged soothsayers quickly meet me
Within the Capitol. I'll there consult them.
All, all is horror in my troublous bosom.

Enter MESSENGER, hastily.

Mess. Sir, to our great surprise, Phanor, so late
Condemn'd by you to death, escaped his prison,
Demands an instant audience, bidding me say,
Something he would impart concerns you nearly.

Mez. O, my foreboding soul! Conduct him hither.

Enter PHANOR.

. Phan. O king! your son, in all alike resistless,
Forc'd me from out my prison, thus disguis'd,
While he most obstinately bent, remains
To meet the fate to which your rigour doom'd me.
I know his stubborn virtue, and much fear
The fatal blow may be already given!
O haste to save him! In the dungeon's gloom
The prince will fall, unknown to his fell murderers.

Mez. (to Phocias.) Fly, fly with lightning's speed
arrest the sentence.

Thou double traitor!—Seize this base-born slave;
To the Tarpeian rock with him—Away!

Phan. This the reward of him who strives to save
His prince from a vile death, from murderous hands!—

Mez. Yet hold. I'll hear if my dear Lausus lives—
If dead, unheard of punishments await thee. [*Exeunt.*

Enter LAVINIA, followed by PHENISSA.

Lav. Now then my hour is come—the fates pursue me
With unrelenting vengeance. See, Atropos
Stands with the wide-stretch'd forfex! Yet, yet be happy,
Be gay, my heart, at this so rare device,
Which gives a father and a brother freedom.
Thus shall they once more be their people's guardians,
Perhaps their great avengers.—Glorious thought!
I too may be remember'd, when that people
Shall tell the story of a rescued nation.—
'Twas well devis'd; I need not grieve to die.

Phen. Talk not of death, dear lady; you are safe.
I read the fatal purpose in your eyes:
And see, I hold the dagger you had hidden
With so much care—'tis now securely mine.

[*Shows a dagger.*

Lav. Alas! alas! thou little know'st, Phenissa—

Enter SOLDIER.

Sold. Madam, the king, my master, bade me say,
He does expect you'll meet him at the altar
Soon as from forth the Capitol he comes,
To ratify the vows already passed,
And seal his happiness by marriage ties.

Lav. When does the king return?

Sold. Some few hours hence.

Lav. Then let me know his pleasure! [*Exit Soldier.*
Some few hours hence?

Why I, in some few moments—Lausus here!—

Enter LAUSUS, followed by PHOCIAS.

Laus. My father slain! Fallen by the soldiers' hands!
Sad fate!—Yet such his arbitrary nature,
I scarcely may deplore him.

Lav. What do I hear? Oh, Heavens!

Laus. Princess! behold an humble suppliant comes
To greet you on your triumph: Mezentius' tyranny
No more shall fright you in your peaceful prospects.
His obsequies perform'd, say, may I hope
To gain the hand of her—her who alone
Can make me truly blest?

Lav. O never, never!
Prince, it can never be.

Laus. What means Lavinia?
I had a hopeful promise when she said—
In answer to my suit, our views all clouded,
“*Perhaps in other times, in other fortune,*
“*She might have lent an ear to Lausus' love.*”
See, other times are come, and other fortune,
Then let me once more urge—

Lav. Oh, add not to my torture!
I have so short a space of time to live,
That I must beg for quiet. Pray you, leave me—

Laus. (aside.) Her reason's still unsettled.

Lav. Yet, ere we part,
Let me confess my love. You had it all—
E'en at the moment fate set bars between us.
Let that suffice—Pray, leave me.

Laus. O joy! O triumph!
Leave thee?

Lav. Peace, peace, the hand of death is heavy on me.

Laus. Your grief's too great—dispel—

Lav. How this poison racks me!
O, I am all a-flame—and now all ice!

Laus. Poison! what murderous hand administered—

Lav. Mine own, mine own!—To give my father freedom
I did agree to wed—death! death!—and then
To free myself, I drank—oh! torture, torture— [*Dies.*

Enter LATINUS and MELANTHUS.

Lat. (not seeing Lavinia.) O dreadful truth ! Phocias
has told me truly.

Where is this wretched girl ? O bring me to her,
That I may kill her by my frown, and save
Our house's honour from such foul defilement.

Laus. O king ! see where the virtuous princess lies,
A breathless corse. The murderer of herself !
No other way was left, she thought, to give
Her father freedom, and to save her honour.

*[Latinus stands for some time motionless,
with his eyes fixed on Lavinia, and then
expires, exclaiming—*

Lat. O Death, complete thy work ! Daughter—I—

Mel. Alas ! my much-lov'd sister, and my father !
O wretched son ! would that my griefs might end me.

Laus. Prince ! Recall thy fortitude and manly virtue ;
I lov'd thy sister with the truest passion,
And shall for ever mourn her. No second love
Can e'er find entrance in my tortur'd bosom.
Well, then, might I, despairing, say with thee,
"Would that my griefs might end me." But when I think
That a brave, faithful people ask my guidance,
I wish to be their leader, and conduct them
Through paths of honour unto true renown.
The like thy duty, now thou art a king.

Yet one word more, Melanthus—

Long, much too long, we've stood oppos'd in arms,
Fighting our fathers' battles, not our own.
Unitèd now, we'll stand for justice only,
Her steadiest champions, and our country's friends :
Thus shall we learn to mitigate our woes,
While ne'er again, brave prince ! we meet as foes.

THE END.

THE GENII,

(GOOD AND EVIL,)

ATTENDANTS ON THE HUMAN RACE.

A MASQUE.

"Scit Genius natale comes qui temperat astrum,
Naturæ Deus humanæ, mortalis in unum
Quodque caput; vultu mutabilis, albus et ater."

HOR. EPIST.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

-- -- --

THE GOOD GENIUS—ZEPHON, and Attendant Spirits.

THE EVIL GENIUS, and Attendant Spirits.

MARCELLUS.

SIMONIDES.

GALATEA.

Captain of the Guard belonging to Dionysius of Syracuse.

SCENE—*Trinacria (now Sicily).*

ADVERTISEMENT.

As in the present performance the Supreme Being is at one time made mention of, and Jupiter at another, it may possibly happen that the scrupulous, yet well-meaning critic, will take alarm, and exclaim against that which he will consider as a mixture of Paganism and Christianity—a blending of *false* religion with the *true*. But on this I must be allowed to observe, that such objection would be by no means valid, as the pagan deities, so denominated, are regarded typically even by the ancients themselves; and that in composition, the influence said to belong to each is merely intended to signify, according to the ordinary language of poetry, the attributes of the GODHEAD.—This censure, as to what is called the intermixture of Christianity and Heathenism; and which has been very injudiciously passed on some of our most esteemed authors by persons who have not sufficiently reflected on the causes that led to it, I think right to invalidate. A more beautiful system than that of the Greek Mythology, could not be invented for the use of the poet.*

* See Lord Bacon's Preface to the Essay "*On the Wisdom of the Ancients*." See also Pope's opinion in regard to the same.

To suppose that it must necessarily include the worship of idols, is truly absurd : yet such is the idea most commonly annexed to it.

However, and to remove all objection in this matter, we may fairly conclude, that these imaginary deities are nothing more than the several powers of nature personified. The fancied being which is thus given to nature's operations, in the character of an immortal agent, is that which constitutes the great beauty of the ancient machinery, and which, as I before remarked, it is not very easy to *equal* by any other allegorical scheme which might be devised, and certainly impossible to *surpass*.

THE GENII.

A MASQUE.

SCENE—THE CONFINE OF A WOOD.

The GOOD GENIUS enters.

G. Gen. IN that bright region of the middle air,
Abode of chosen beings, who partake
Of the celestial nature,—Genii call'd,—
My proper station is: for of the order
Of these the lesser deities I am.
And sooth it is, though men may think it fabled,
That unto each of the whole human race
Two demons are assign'd, of equal power,
To virtue and to vice inciting them—
True progeny are they of Heaven and Hell—
Who from the first breath to the last, attendant
Are ever found; and by their agency have power.
Now I on earth, with human form invested,
Am come as man's *Good Genius*: friendship's name
And office bearing, while I mark the path
That to the consecrated temple leads
Of honour, truth, and justice.—Glorious goal!
A goal which whosoever attains, perceives
A more than mortal animation warm
His full and throbbing bosom: native dignity,
A perfect sense of the high rank he holds
In vast creation's round: still more ennobled
By his own virtuous deeds, awakes such consciousness,
That worldly limitations seem to him
But made for worldly men. Through all the barriers,
By these set up, his ardent soul would break:

Fain would it soar, fain reach the ethereal space,
Or higher empyrean, where the hierarchy,
The host of angels met in holy synod,
And deep revolving on eternal mind,
Prepare to execute the sovran will.—
To that high seat his eager eye is turn'd,
That blissful place where man's benighted spirit,
All free, all comprehensive—once so bounded !
And with still purer essences communing,
Loses in love divine all sensual pleasures.
For this *he* panted whom 'twas mine to lead
Through the drear mazes of this nether world ;—
And now supremely blest, on seraph wing
He gains the glorious mansion of the skies ;
Meet recompense for goodness next to Heaven's.—
Yet even on earth his joys were all sublime,
For those of mind alone he cared to cherish ;
By me embolden'd too, he calmly travers'd
The vasty desert, haunt of salvage men—
A new Alcides, emulous of good—
Nor fear'd more potent, nor more subtle foe,
Closed in his coat of steel, the gift of TRUTH !
In vain the evil Genius spread his wiles,
His glittering baits to draw him to the springe :
Onward he mov'd untempted ;—for the arts
Of Vice he saw, though gloss'd with seeming Virtue.
Him, and all such, superior Genii honour.
But oh ! sad case, when he who thwarts me ever,
The envious demon using all his cunning,
Like to a black magician with his spells,
Has practis'd on the weak, unthinking heart,
And brought it to his lure ; then for some little time,
An inmate he becomes of Pleasure's palace :
Her magic dome, where Beauty's sparkling glance
Invites him to the mask and midnight revel,
Where reign still varying, ever new delights.
Next the gay, festive board allures his eye
With fancied charms :—anon his raptur'd spirits

Send him quick bounding, like the elk, to join it.
 He tastes ambrosia! nectar's in the cup!
 But soon he finds the whole was touch'd with poison.

But to my sacred duties:—else the name
 Of Abdiel, servant of the Most High, but ill
 To me would appertain.—Hear then those duties,
 Yet better pleasures call'd: my well-tried charge
 No sooner join'd the immortals, than another
 Was to my tutorage given.—The lov'd youth,
 The princely mind, whom I am now to prompt
 To all such generous, all such noble conduct,
 As, though his place be high, shall most distinguish it.
 Yes, with the princely boy, become my care,
 I straight must converse hold, and put in act
 Those sweet propensities, those happy gifts,
 Which even in childhood budded, promise giving
 To grow and ripen with his growing stature.
 O, happy nonage! my strict watch not demanding.—
 But that now nearly past, it well behooves me
 To counteract the dark and deep designs
 Of my fell rival, Sathan.—Such the name
 By which earth knows him: albeit the agent only
 Of him who bears it vauntful—man's prime enemy,
 The great deceiver, parent of sin and death!—
 Well, young Marcellus, soon shall it be known
 If thine be actual worth, for such I think it.
 So much hast thou to encounter, that the experienc'd
 Might bend, perchance succumb, on such assailment:
 Beset on all sides, great will be the peril—
 Yet, if from forth the field thou victor com'st,
 How vast must be thy merits! none assisting,
 No mortal arm! Nor can I succour offer,
 O'er human deeds no power to me is given:
 A spirit of persuasion merely am I, and man
 In all free agent: and thence his honour or disgrace:
 For as he may demean himself, or one or other
 Will still to him attach, nor in his death be lost.
 But he I'm bound to instruct will soon be here,—

For these calm scenes of pure and simplest nature,
 His meditative humour most affects.
 I must be then mere mortal—and the name
 Of Abdiel forego for that of *Socius*—
 The appellation by which mankind acknowledge me.—
 Cruel exchange; but that the prospect's gladsome.—
 For should this youth escape the present danger,
 Should he resist the allurements of my adversary,
 I then may quit him; safe, though unadmonish'd:
 Safe in his innate goodness—fully assay'd—
 His character on Virtue's tablet blazon'd.—
 Thus think I of him: yet will watchful be, and by vision,
 Precepts impart as in my earthly capacity—
 Then may I seek again my airy dwelling,
 And all my proud distinctions there resume,
 All my celestial properties—a spirit pure!
 'Till death has shut Marcellus in the tomb,
 And some new duty calls me.

But it is meet that now my sprites
 I summon; and perform the rites,
 Those holy rites which, though but shown
 In vision, still shall for my own
 This adolescent fix so rare,
 This imp deserving all my care.
 Then hail'd as mine and Virtue's son,
 He no inglorious course will run;
 And if in arts or arms renown
 He gain—decreed the festive crown—
 That fame shall live, though quench'd his fire,
 • Nor but with time itself expire.

Zephon! and ye inferior sprites, be present.—
 When she, the glory of the stars, shall next
 Pursue her splendid course, we mean to send
 In solemn act our thanks to highest Heaven,
 For all the bounties on us and mankind long shower'd.
 Prepare the custom'd rites,—that so the Eternal
 Be ever honour'd in our love and duty.

Zep. Prince! we this summons joyfully obey:
And still more pleas'd will execute your orders,—
The time when *Cynthias* revels we resume,
The time so meet for sacrifice and homage.

Cynthia with her silvery light
Hath scared away black visag'd night.—
The while bright *Hesperus* is seen
Conductor of the bright-brow'd queen.
Now she will dance the wavy main,
Attended by her starry train;
Then, ever changeful, dart with speed,
And gambol o'er the daisied mead.
Anon ascend the craggy steep
To watch *Endymion* in his sleep;
Next, graceful, seek the leafy grove,
Tempering the youthful breast to love:
Or by some violet-border'd stream,
Inspire the calm poetic dream,
Which, 'mid the haunts of *Philomel*,
Each gentler spirit loves to tell.—
While he, fond-frenzied *Fancy's* child,
Who joys to roam the wood and wild,
More deeply touch'd, the ecstatic song
Pours out the rugged rocks among,
Till *Echo*, waken'd by the sound,
Sends through each cave in quick rebound
The notes, which lesser echoes bear
Murmuring—then lost in distant air!
Now too the lone enthusiast strays,
Chanting his great Creator's praise:
Or else contemplative he walks,
Or with the unembodied talks
Enraptur'd—till sleep close his eyes,
When visions still sublimer rise!
These are the charms which Heaven bestows,
To sooth man's self-created woes;

Boons that full oft to transports move,
Scarce less than we, the air-born, prove.

Gen. Yet,—ere these rites,—have ready at my call
The several phantasms which we late devis'd
To charm the young Marcellus—

Zeph.

Abdiel, we go.

And, best belov'd, doubt not our care and diligence.

Gen. No, dear associates:—ye were faithful ever.
Then to your task. Away! Here comes my pupil.
Slowly he moves, on some grave matter bent,—
And now, aloud, he with himself is reasoning.
I will remain unseen by him awhile;—
Perchance, that way, I may some bosom secret
Discover;—which might else be hidden
From me his friend profess'd, and own'd as such,—
Youthful timidity—or it may be shame—
If shame belong thereto—urging concealment.
But I must now my sky-tinct vest put on,—
Work of Minerva's hand; which, being compos'd
Of filmy dews, lies in this ring's small compass.
This must I do, and into air resolve me:
For so 'twill be,—or unto mortal eye
So seem,—since all will then to his dim sight
Be perfect void: nor can I then my shape,
My human form resume, 'till doff'd this habit,
This heavenly robe, for heavenly purpose given me.
Now then, unconscious, he'll to me impart
His joys or sorrows.—Much I wish to know them;
Not idly curious, but still to him bearing
A love which prompts me to become his true adviser.

MARCELLUS enters.

Marc. This interdiction of my honour'd father
Should be in all obey'd, however painful—
However adverse to my dearest wishes.
On foreign travel long my hopes have rested,
But this is now forbidden.—Strict the mandate,
And yet for such restraint no cause assign'd me.

O Anacharsis!—thou whose splendid mind
 'Mid Græcia's sons acquired still greater splendour:
 Who, by thy wayfare through her happy states,
 Hast to thyself and countrymen procured
 Such high advantage,—how envied must thou be!
 Fortunate youth, who no restriction knew'st:
 To thee a large extensive route was given,
 A route which led to pleasure, fame, and profit.
 For me, beyond the circuit of Trinacria,
 This little isle, my step must never deviate:
 My views all narrow'd by its narrow limits.
 My soul, disdainful of these trammels, pants,
 Even while it owns a parent's high authority;
 For objects worthy of its nobler exercise.
 In this dilemma, what should I determine?
 A bold remonstrance on this harsh proceeding,
 Is yet remaining for me.—I will try it.

G. Gen. I must some counsel give him, or this warmth
 May lead to serious mischiefs. All hail, Marcellus!

Marc. All hail, my full-approved, high-valued friend:
 Grieved though I am, thy presence sure will cheer me.

G. Gen. Whence this dejection? whence these sounds
 of sorrow?

Marc. Whence? when all my honest pleasures are
 denied me.

!uch cause for sorrow, or I err, good Socius.
 'Tis to thy guidance, thy advice I owe
 That happy state of mind,—which had now remain'd;
 But that my budding hope to tread the steps
 Of him, who “many men and manners saw,”
 Lies wholly blasted. See me now condemn'd
 To yawn out life in wretched inactivity.

G. Gen. Must thou inactive be, because forbidden
 In foreign climes to roam? . Much may be urged
 How distant travel, injures or improves;
 Since every land evil and good produces.
 'Tis true, indeed, that the superior character,
 He that's by Vice untouch'd, arm'd and right proof

Against her machinations, charms and smiles—
 For smiles and charms she has, though meretricious—
 To him who thus is armed, and triple shielded,
 Good may arise from travel: that enlargement,
 That comprehensiveness of mind,—that intellect,
 Which brings to the possessor highest honour:
 Yet this acknowledged, I would not infer
 That 'twould be unattain'd by private study:
 Nay, from this last, perhaps advantage greater
 Might be derived, since much will still depend
 On genius, disposition, inbred qualities—
 In fine, whom Nature more than Man has fashion'd.
 But to relieve thy sorrows, tell me briefly
 In what I best may serve thee.

Marc.

Oh! thou art kind.

G. Gen. Good youth! and yet thou little know'st how
 much

I have labour'd for thee in the world's opinion:
 How oft set forth thy virtues to full view;
 And bade the admiring people tend them nicely.
 This, like the sunbeams to the opening flower,
 Has into day brought that which else had wither'd.
 But when some future moment shall reveal me,
 Perhaps thou'lt grant I am not a talking friend,
 One prodigal of words alone or promises,
 One, who at will, from forth his guileful eye
 Pours tears, as do the syrens; when those tears
 May best entice their victim.

Marc.

But I shall lose thee;—

For thou hast said that soon to distant regions
 Thy step must be directed. Ah me! unhappy.
 Friendship, all-powerful friendship, that enchants us
 By ever new regards,—say whence thy being,
 Earth-born or heavenly art thou? Surest, heavenly!
 Yet, like Astrea visiting this ball
 In pity to our hapless, woe-worn race,
 Not long thy sojourn here, to make earth glad.
 Wilt thou then go, and may not I attend thee?

G. Gen. That cannot be. Take from me this assurance,
I travel swift, and oft will visit thee.

Marc. Thy words bring comfort:—for e'en now as ever,
New life I find when thou but merely counsell'st me.
I know not whence thou art nor what;—but know,
Thou seem'st my better angel, my good Genius!

G. Gen. Right hast thou judg'd; and such I stand
confess'd ;

But still as a mere mortal must thou hold me:
Temperance thou lean'st to,—Now I to thy sight
Will raise such beauteous and majestic vision,
That thou wilt be enamour'd of her fully,
Unless the Evil Genius, my proud enemy,—
And who, like me, has leave to call in aid
Of all his purposes the sprites of air,—
Shall by his fascinations more engage thee:
For gay Volupia still attends his beck,
And loves on youth to practise all her witcheries.
I cannot, like to him, a promise give thee,
Of pleasures but from bodily sense arising,
Since mine are calm enjoyments, sanction'd by Reason:
Nor can I countervail the least his artifice;
But soon of these thou wilt have power to judge.
Thou hast thy choice,—with me or him may'st side;
Yet much I hope to hail thee, my adopted,
While Virtue thou shalt greet as foster-mother.

Marc. Agent of Heaven! I list thy sacred counsels;
Say then what course pursue: O how conduct me?

G. Gén. Hear, then. Forbidden, for reasons doubtless
cogent—

And which thou soon wilt know—to quit thy country,
Yet think not that thy coming years must thence
Be heedless thrown unprofitably away:
Or that on Luxury's couch supinely thrown,
To conjure up imaginary wants,
Make fancied evils; and then to Heaven complain,
Of its hard dealing with thee, were befitting
This thy high state—practis'd too oft by many!

For other cause have life and health been given thee.
 But still thou fear'st if kept at home, thy days
 Will pass ingloriously :—that senseless apathy
 Must, in such case, the sure attendant be.
 Yet wherefore this? Large store of wealth thou hast,
 Extensive thy domain, and great thy power;
 Look then around thee, and employ all these,
 As well becomes the lord of such possessions :
 Search out for virtue, merit, palsied age,
 Sickness, and labour sinking under penury.
 Then if thou canst, be idle—and idle wretched;
 If with indifference thou canst view men's ills,
 Blest as thou art with every earthly comfort,
 I will at once renounce, and leave thee wholly :
 Nay, thus degenerate, all shall learn to shun thee.
 Yet wherefore talk of sloth? Marcus' first wish
 Has been to see his eldest born a soldier.

Marc. Oft he with strenuousness hath urged me to it.

G. Gen. At length resolved on this, he doth expect
 Thy full compliance——

Marc. O direful tidings!

G. Gen. How say'st thou,—direful! thy loved country
 serving?

Marc. All war is direful—I am no coward, Socius,
 Yet should stern Fortune take me to the field,
 Pity, the eldest daughter of the skies,
 Would aye be in my sight. Methinks I see her,
 When the dread battle rages at its full,
 In heavenly radiance skim along the plain :
 Anon behold her mount the glittering car
 Of some great warrior; with downcast, streaming eyes
 She strives to move him: he regards her not,
 But levels at the coming foe his lance.
 His lance she seizes, and would turn its point,
 From wretched man to wound the air alone;
 But fierce Bellona lends her savage aid,
 New-nerves his arm, and gives the deadly blow.—
 The weeping goddess hangs her head and sighs:

Then, gathering fortitude, she bravely bears
 The view while fiercely rolls the tide of war;
 Yet when the battle's done, she thinks that those
 Who show'd like pards or tigers in their rage,
 Will hear her heavenly voice. With sounds as bland
 As Zephyrus, when first he wakes the spring,
 She whispers in the victor's ear the law,
 Which was by gods ordain'd, to aid the afflicted;
 To give to trembling agony assuagement,
 The balm of comfort, and the hopes of peace.—
 Is she unheeded still?—Then farewell, Virtue!
 Farewell to all that marks our nobler kind!
 Let man no longer boast himself *supreme*,
 But give to lesser animals his place,
 His rank in fair creation.

G. Gen. O fine declaimer!

What boots this virtue which thou vaunt'st so bravely?
 Do we not daily see this boasted PRY,
 Dash'd to the ground, and trampled on by those
 To whom her arm was stretch'd out in the hour
 Of danger and dismay? Do we not see her
 Stabb'd to the heart, while pouring oil i' th' wounds
 Which the dread Fates with erring hand had made?

Marc. Too sure we see it! and too sure Ingratitude,
 That first-born fiend of hell, full oft appears
 On earth, and spreads her baleful influence round:
 Yet shall we think the many imbibe the poison,
 Gladly imbibe it? Far, far be such opinion.
 It is the great, prime quality in man,
 To feel for others' miseries and to soothe them.

G. Gen. Yet hast thou thought what splendours will
 await thee,
 If from the field victorious thou return'st,
 In conquest clothed, and trumpet-toned renown?

Marc. Conquest! Renown! name not these hateful
 phantoms.

G. Gen. So victory in the world's large volume's
 written:

So blown abroad, whate'er the cause for quarrel.
 But though the laurel deck thy victor brow,
 Forget not that it drops with human blood :
 Though an admiring people give thee welcome,
 With shouts and songs of triumph : still thy bosom,
 By sympathy's sweet influence moved, can feel
 For the vast wretchedness Bellona brings,—
 Too surely brings to all who bear her standard.
 I did but speak of war in seeming favour,
 To try thy nature. War, indeed, is infamous,
 And save on the defensive, never justified.—
 And such Trinacria may yet sustain.
 You hate your tyrant ruler, but you love
 Your fruitful country ; therefore will protect it
 Against the invader, wholly bent on rapine.

Marc. To the last spark of life I would defend it :
 But 'tis not now our country's cause that calls us ;
 'Tis Dionysius' battles we must fight.
 The expedition, by himself projected,
 Plann'd, there is little doubt, but to avert
 From his own head the mischiefs threat'ning him,
 And now will on a mild and peaceful people
 Bring dire calamity, and it may be ruin.
 My father sees not this usurper's baseness,
 Or to such hateful warfare would not urge me.

G. Gen. I feel my Rival near. Now, kindred spirits,
 Attend : and bring, in vision, all those pleasures
 That purer souls delight in. Let graceful dance,
 With sweetest minstrelsy, be brought in aid of them.
 Meet show for him, the youth whose days are given
 To heaven-taught poesy, and who strikes the lyre
 With boldest hand—a master in the art ;
 The Muses love him, and at their command,
 I on his head Castalian dews distill ;—
 High grace, though not like that which Melesigenes
 Did from their mighty prince receive. But still
 Such inspiration had he, that his name
 Shall live in after times,—Trinacria's glory !

*ZEPHON and other inferior Spirits enter.**

Goddess! each rude passion quelling,
 Take Marcellus to thy dwelling.
 Quick! so full confess'd of truth
 And goodness, now receive this youth:
 He's most unfit fell war to wage.—
 Receive, retain him as the gage
 For peace within your lov'd retreats,
 The Virtues' and the Muses' seats,
 He, with the nymphs, in hallow'd groves
 And old Sylvanus frequent roves.—
 How, on the pearly river's brink,
 Must he then love to sit and think
 With thee, of Nature's higher laws,
 Or ponder on the first great Cause!
 Who to the world's stupendous frame
 Gives life and order,—boons that claim
 Our sense of good: the which we own,
 In peals sent up to Mercy's throne.

G. Gen. But see, our foe is here. Awhile retire.

The EVIL GENIUS and his Attendant Spirits enter.

E. Gen. Now then, confederate spirits, let us prove
 Our zeal in this great service. Abdiel's powers
 Are all employ'd against us: all at work
 To win the young Marcellus to his purpose.
 We must devise some show, some splendid pageantry
 To catch his eye. The inexperienc'd mind
 Not long against the fascinating mockery
 Will make resistance. Soon his boasted virtues,
 And self-denials, into air shall vanish;
 The while his proud preceptor stands confounded.
 No little glory ours in such a warfare
 To come off victors—conquerors over him
 Who boasts celestial succours. Think on that,

And let the unequal contest more inspirit ye.
 'Tis true, indeed, the Genii of our order
 Far more successful are than those of Abdiel ;
 Since mortals almost all to Luxury's charms,
 And witching beauties, turn a willing eye.
 Not such the present temper of this stripling ;
 Tutor'd by him we hate, he yet withstands
 Our gay allurements. Something more attractive
 Must then forthwith be practis'd : some bright vision,
 Some fine illusion.—Till in the giddy whirl,
 His senses lost, and reason quite thrown down,
 We straightway claim him subject of our master.

G. Gen. Behold the fiend ! We now with him must
 try our strength.

ZEPHON.

Gold-hair'd Aurora wakes the day,
 And glittering Phanæus holds his way
 Over high heaven's transparent arch :
 The Horæ following his proud march,
 Graced with the ensign of his sway,—
 A sceptre, bearing on its top an eye,
 To note that through his means we do all things
 descry.

Hark ! the sweet melodious measures ;
 Hear ye not Music's thrilling notes,
 Brought by Favonius' breath that floats
 Balmy,—bringing pastoral pleasures.
 See ! a true Tempe we enjoy :
 And now the rural nymphs advance,—
 Haste not away, then, gentle boy,
 But join our sacred song and dance,—
 Our delights have no alloy,
 Pastimes that the soul entrance !
 Sports we own which love the light,
 No veil'd Cotyttria of the night
 By us are known. The flower-sprent green,
 Press'd by the silver-footed queen,

Sends forth new fragrance, grows more bright,—
 As to Comarchian strains she lightly moves,
 While round the Graces play, and ever blooming
 loves.

Who feel Minerva's holy fire,
 To joys beyond this earth aspire :
 Quickly they flee from pomp and show,—
 Too frequent harbingers of woe !—
 So here, 'mid shady groves and bowers,
 Serenely glide the short-lived hours :
 While we our homage duly pay
 To heaven's great King, in holiest lay.
 This can alone true peace impart—
 This the true rapture of the heart !

EVIL GENIUS.

Away ! Nor think that joys like these,
 Such unsubstantial bliss, can please.
 Let the poor transports of the mind
 To poring schoolmen be confined :
 We genuine pleasures higher rate,
 Smoothing th' asperities of fate !
 Lo ! where the rosy god appears,
 The god that woe-worn mortals cheers ;
 Mirthful, and in eternal youth ;
 Daring the great dictator Truth !
 He seeks our light disportive throng,
 To join with him, renown'd in song
 The mighty Sol, who doth dispense
 Impartial, his blest influence.
 Hail, deities ! that make both day
 And night all joyous, ever gay :
 Your gifts anticipate the sky,
 And lap the soul in ecstasy ;
 For wine and verse were surely given,
 As foretastes of the bliss of heaven ;

Bacchus behold ! as erst he came,
 Leading the Cytherean dame ;
 Beauteous as from the wave she rose ;—
 Around her humid eyes she throws
 Blissful : while on her lip the sigh,
 The half-fram'd murmuring accents die.—
 A goddess, sure ! and hail'd above,
 As here below, the *Queen of love*.
 Bacchus and Venus ! powers divine,
 Lowly we bend before your shrine—
 You our great solace here on earth,
 Since dire Pandora's plagues had birth.

ZEPHON and others of the Good Spirits.

Daughter of heaven ! immortal Truth,
 Behold this brave, ingenuous youth.
 O, shed thy radiance o'er his mind ;—
 Then shall these phantoms to the wind
 Be quickly given : high rais'd his name ;
 And quell'd the foe in fear and shame.

Inferior of the Evil Genii.

Come, no more reject our proffers ;
 Far be from you such heartless scoffers,
 Who rail at pleasures their dull taste
 Could never relish. Haste, O haste
 To dwell with mirth ! and share the whole
 Delights that move 'twixt either pole.

Superior of the Evil Genii.

Yet listen : We will more ensure,
 Than these our agents can procure.
 All elements we know : the earth,
 Air, fire, or water fit our birth ;

So the extremest points we try,—
 Delve to the centre, mount the sky!
 'Till, with the labour tired, we lave
 Our limbs in Neptune's wat'ry cave.

* * * * *

Now then, observe how we have sped.
 See, coral from old Ocean's bed
 We bear, with gems which far outshine
 The choicest of Golconda's mine;
 Pearls, which royalty might wear,
 Snatch'd from bright Berenice's hair.
 So we command the stars: can sway
 The Queen of night and King of day.
 Task then our service. Shall we bring
 Jupiter's belt, or Saturn's ring?
 But more, in hope to gain renown,
 Wouldst have famed Ariadne's crown?
 Or do you wish for purest gold,
 From Pluto's realm? Your slaves behold!
 Speak, then—nor fear our aim we miss,
 'Twixt heaven's high dome and hell's abyss.

E. Gen. Some mortal tread approaches;—seek your
 covert.

We must not now be seen. Soon will I summon ye.

G. Gen. Who is the female, pacing yonder glade?
 In meditation lost, she sees us not.

Marc. 'Tis Galatea, daughter to good Simonides—
 Lovely as Eos, when from forth the cave
 Of Nox she issues, to announce great Sol,
 The brilliant God; he who to all creation
 Gives health and vigour, evermore maintaining them.
 Happy Simonides! And in his muse high favour'd;
 For not in Doric or Æolic verse,
 Or even Ionian, far the most esteem'd—
 Not in the lyric song, nor epic flight,
 Is he surpass'd; save by the Theban swan,

And the Mæonian eagle,—claim'd of many.
 Think not this praise, though high, is undeserv'd,
 Since, with the Teian, and fam'd Lesbian maid,
 In competition oft hath he been set,
 Nor found inferior. Blest thus in himself,
 No adventitious good from others seeking,
 He, with his daughter, in yon woody wild,
 Leads the primæval life in all its dignity:
 Ascetic seeming, though without austerities.
 Long has he thus in calm seclusion dwelt,
 Yet much had suffer'd, but this peerless woman—
 If woman I may say, whose every action,
 Whose every deed, superior nature intimates—
 With watch incessant, to his wants still ministers:
 Nay, makes that burthen light, which else would press
 On him full heavily; for his years are many.
 Yes, much has she endur'd to aid this father;
 From th' world's contumely and pride has sav'd him;
 Combating perils even at her life's hazard,
 But this from Heaven will meet with just reward.

G. Gen. Most sure. What better can claim celestial
 favour,
 Than love of parent, kindred, or of friend?
 But filial chiefest. Above that sacred duty,
 Nought can be found; nor is there aught so enviable:
 It is from such affections that the soul
 Takes her best energies—derives her fire:
 Untouch'd by these, e'en Genius, Wisdom, Valour,
 Their brightness lose, and sink in estimation
 With Virtue's pupils. Galatea's excellence
 Full well I know; nor hast thou overrated it.
 Scarce more Æneas, old Anchises bearing
 Forth on his shoulders, from the flames of Troy,
 Renown deserv'd. Scarce more the Roman matron,
 The virtuous Arria, when in her breast the dagger
 She deeply plung'd, and then to Pætus gave it,
 The while she calmly bade him *Use it likewise*,—
 Adding with smiles—*believe me, 'tis not painful*.

Marc. And yet such beauty in this desert fading,
This dreary solitude to her must—

G. Gen. Speak not thus;
For Galatea, like thyself, is charm'd;
And in retirement she ever dwells delighted.
Be thou assur'd, that heart is incorrupt,
Which finds in such a state its best enjoyments.
In a sequester'd life, the higher virtues
Show themselves more than with the crowd commingled.
This may to some a paradox appear,
But unto him who knows its actual pleasures,
All others are but mockery, mere illusions!
'Tis there all worth, all purity abides,—
In cities seldom found: or found, fantastic,
Unreal—an ostentatious charity display'd;
While Vice, perhaps, holds empire in the breast,
And like Tisiphonè but scatters mischief.—

Marc. But see! the sylvan nymph in haste re-
tires,
Alarm'd, as it would seem, at our intrusion.

G. Gen. Blest spirits! To Galatea raise the song.

ZEPHON.

1.

Goddess of the silver bow,
Huntress, Dian,—kindly show
To thy follower in the chase,
To thy virgin votary grace—
To Galatea! she who claims
A place among the brightest names
Which thou, impartial, hast set down
As worthy of the star-deck'd crown
To Virtue promis'd. 'Tis for her—
For Galatèa, we prefer
Our humble suit. O lend thine ear,
And favour grant her,—Goddess dear!
So shall she, a distinguish'd dame,
Like thee, still live in endless fame.

2.

O Piety ! illustrious fair,—
 Devote to Heaven, and thence its care,
 Behold a maid from thine own school :
 Practis'd in each sovereign rule
 By thee laid down, our faith to prove,—
 Regardful of the Almighty's love.

Thy precepts,—which a parent's good
 To seek enjoin—least understood !
 By her are held as holy laws,
 And strictly follow'd.—Thus she draws
 From her own breast that true delight,
 Which smiles in Fortune's utmost spite.

Then, ever-gracious,—while on earth,
 Point out such high, unequall'd worth ;
 That when translated to the skies,
 She more may charm our wondering eyes.

*Others of Abdiel's Band of Spirits enter, habited like
 Sicilian Shepherds.*

FIRST SPIRIT.

See ! 'tis full meridian day ;—
 Now the sprightly Auræ play
 Around us,—fragrant odours bringing,
 Which, from their downy pinions flinging,
 Nature revives with livelier bloom,
 And wider spreads the rich perfume.

SECOND SPIRIT.

With Io Pæans fill the air,
 Trinacria still is Phœbus' care,—
 'Tis here he casts his kindlier rays,
 Here sing we then his higher praise ;

Let songs, let Pæans reach the sky,—
Such as with Delphic hymns may vie !

THIRD SPIRIT.

Lo ! at our call the glorious Nine,—
Urania first, yclep'd divine :
Celestial muse ! who never sings
Of aught save heaven and heavenly things ;
While next *Melpomene* appears,
In all her beauty—bath'd with tears :
Follow'd by her of studied wiles,
Thalia hight—the Queen of smiles.
Then comes *Euterpe*, whose sweet strain,
The listening ear must long detain.
And *Erato*, who c'en in Jove
Might light answ the flames of love ;
Clio, whose pen inscribes the name
Of worthies on the roll of fame ;
Terpsichore, whose graceful ease
In dancing evermore will please !
Polhymnia, still memory's friend,
Wont on the youthful mind to tend :
And last *Calliope*, whose voice
Makes Nature's general soul rejoice.
All hail, Aonian maids ! The knee,
To you and bright *Mnemosyne*,
Your happy mother,—see we bend ;
Votaries so faithful then befriend,
Our breasts inform : and O inspire
Some portion of your heavenly fire !
So we the great Apollo's praise
May sound, in ever-living lays.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

Now sing we universal Pan,
Great Nature's symbol ;—He whom man
In lowliest reverence hails a god.—
Life's prime sustainer ! at whose nod

Eleus and Ceres their large store,
 Gain'd from the Earth's warm bosom, pour
 Forth to the world, in amplest measure,
 Whence spring health, and peace, and pleasure.
 O Deity ! from out the hills,
 Where now thou roam'st, recruit the rills
 By Sirius drain'd ; and still thine eye
 Keep watchful,—Nymphs ! our founts supply.
 Yet more—Kind power, protect our flocks,
 Where now they stray o'er Etna's rocks ;
 Nor let the heifers of the vale,
 In udder'd treasures ever fail :
 Still give the gold rod of our fields
 Unmildew'd,—grant what Terra yields
 Pure, and to thee in sacrifice
 Flames from our altars still shall rise !

GOOD GENIUS.

Again the wily machinator appears.—

The EVIL GENIUS and Attendant Spirits enter.

FIRST SPIRIT.

Old Silenus with the fauns,
 Satyrs, and nymphs have left the lawns.—
 Welcome the Mimallonian crew !
 Prepare the rites to Bacchus due.

SECOND SPIRIT.

The Priests and Bacchæ now draw near :
 Evohe ! Evohe ! greets mine ear.
 Prepare the rites : when mortals sleep,
 We then shall higher orgies keep.

THIRD SPIRIT.

Now, too, behold the Paphian train,
 Laughing, approach gay Eros' fane.
 The Erycinian goddess there
 Presides, to list her votaries' prayer :

There, too, bright Hymen ready stands,
 To knit them in his silken bands.
 Haste, deck it with your rosy wreaths,
 What time the west wind gently breathes.
 Who would war with pleasure wage,
 Save trembling Eld?—Yet how engage
 This peevish youth? Come, taste our joys :
 Immortal sure,—where nothing cloy.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

He listens.—Zephyrus, Cupid's sire,
 Will kindly watch the lambent fire
 Which round the young Marcellus plays,
 And fan it to a brighter blaze :
 Such as on Venus' altar glows,
 When to relieve her pungent woes
 For dear Adonis slain,—we bring
 Oblations suitable, and fling
 Incense thercon,—whose vapours rise
 In grateful odours to the skies.

ZEPHON, attendant on the Good Genius.

Haste, beauteous Flora,—hither bring
 The various sweets of laughing Spring :
 For well we know the gentle hours
 Cull from your garden choicest flowers,
 Which, with the bay and myrtle twined,
 The Graces into garlands bind,
 To deck the brow of Valour, Worth,
 And Wisdom,—most esteem'd on earth !

* * * *

Come, judges ! your rewards dispense,
 On him who boasts each excellence,
 The youth to pleasure's syren strain,
 Deaf as Ulysses' ear-stopt train :
 Come ! your impartial course pursue,
 And give to honour, honour's due !

Marc. Behold, where Galatea comes. Retire,
Nor interrupt in aught her peaceful pleasures.

Gal. What have I heard? To Dionysius' court,
With specious show of friendship my sire invited!
'Tis said my personal charms, though mean and few,
Have met with high report; and thence this bidding,
This seeming kindness, and this seeming honour,
Envied, no doubt, by some. But though command
Might yet be his, guile must by us be practis'd:—
The many excellences of my honour'd parent,
Belov'd of the whole isle, arrest his violence.
Tyrant though in heart he be, his fears prevail,
The people lately rose in arms against him.—
Yet this he thinks may now engage us better.
No, dear Simonides, to his insidious words
Thou shalt not listen: to art be art opposed;
Devise we something then to cheat this slave,
Whom fond and trembling nations style a king.—
A king? Dishonour'd title!—Kings should boast
A more than earthly goodness: celestial attributes
In part belong to them. The sword they hold
Should be the sword of justice, and that only:
Yet oft 'tis drawn to most nefarious purpose.
If we can lull this Dionysius, well:—
But should he still persist to call us hence,
I will awake him to a sense of danger.
Forbearance then will follow: for, firmly oppos'd,
His craven heart hath frequently betray'd him.

* * * * *

O native woods! O wilds! where even in infancy
I loved at large to roam. O nymphs! O dryads!
O, ye inhabitants of this blest domain,
This place where treachery never yet found dwelling!
And shall I then for Dionysius' splendours
'Your sacred haunts abandon? Never, never.
Since force he dares not use, here will I tarry,
Here will I ever dwell, and to the rocks
My fond complainings utter. The rocks and caves

Will, by their echoes, wont in my griefs to share,
 Tell to the sylvan train this newer sorrow.
 'Tis they must give me comfort—the golden lyre,
 By Nomius' self invented, when in the vale
 Of Arcady he led the pastoral life,
 The life of nature,—far from me is thrown ;
 The lyre priz'd by Simonides beyond a diadem—
 Even by the master's hand now touch'd, the sounds
 So late all harmony, would to my ear be discord.

[*Enter SIMONIDES.*]

But here he comes, who is to me an empire.
 My much-lov'd father ! say, why wilt thou leave
 Thy couch till higher day ?—Scarce has the bird of Jove
 Prun'd his moist wing, and from his airy dwelling
 Through earth's dense vapours sought the solar road,
 Than from repose, so needful to thy age,
 With all its honours, thou art come—

Sim.

To seek a daughter,

A child to me more precious than the founts,
 The vital founts which play within my heart :
 To offer, likewise, at that sainted shrine,
 The tomb of her who brought thee into being,
 My orisons to the great Power who all things orders :
 The Omnipresent,—and of whose immensity
 Nature speaks loudly : even in her atoms speaks ;
 And brings confusion on that impious tongue,
 Which dares to question Heaven's eternal goodness.

Gal. Celestial spirits ! ye, who the faith of old,
 And honour love,—protect, O, still protect him ;
 This best of fathers, and this first of men !

Sim. Cease, cease these fears. Life has for me no charms,
 But such as are derived from thee alone :
 There is my boast ! For thee, then, I would live
 Beyond man's date. But death—O death ! what art
 thou ?

Something or nothing ; substance, or shadow only ?
 Thou who affright'st men in the social hour ;

Even when the Queen of love, and God of wine,
 Sit smiling at their board. Dreadful to all thy nature,
 Save those who by Philosophy's mild precepts
 Moulded and fashion'd are: who ne'er repine
 At aught that may await them—equal in all things!

Enter MARCELLUS.

Marc. To thee, Simonides, and thy fair daughter,
 Marcellus wisheth health. Our mighty master,
 As fame hath told, invites you to partake
 His princely pleasures: yet you here remain
 Recluse, as though such honours were as nothing,
 Or of you unworthy.

Sim. Well hast thou augur'd:
 Such we must hold them,—honours to us are nought
 But from a soul of honour. Yet fearing Dionysius,
 His power still great, dissimulation have I practis'd,
 Though to my nature foreign;—and declined them
 humbly.

Yet Galatea harsher answer would have given him.

Marc. His power, so seemingly great, unstable stands.
 Guarded by mercenaries, he dreads his people.
 No act of violence hath he committed lately,
 But yet I fear he will not brook denial:
 And see, his captain comes,—no doubt, to seek ye.

Enter CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Capt. From Dionysius am I come—who sorrows
 That good Simonides' age will not admit
 Removal to the palace: but for his daughter,
 The lovely Galatea—I have orders
 To urge her instant hence, and to high honours.

Gal. Honours to me? and from him, too! 'Tis insult.

Capt. Maiden, you bear yourself by far too proudly:
 Know—to superior power the mind should bend,
 And learn humility from adverse fortune.

Gal. Yes, base, ignoble souls may crouch to power,—

The storms of fate to them may dreadful seem.
 I see the tempest gathering o'er my head,
 Yet stand unmoved, nor deprecate his vengeance.

Capt. It yet may reach thee.—

Gal. Why, that is nobly said ;
 To add to miseries which himself has wrought,
 Were glorious triumph ! 'twould befit the hero !—
 Then to distraction driven, I—

Marc. Distraction ? O, mortal !
 Thou wondrous microcosm,—how dost thou show
 When Reason abdicates her beamy throne,
 Giving to lawless rage supremacy ?—
 When all is anarchy and wild uproar,
 Within thy nobly plann'd, though little state.
 Be calmer, fair one.

Capt. More temper, scornful beauty.

Gal. For what is valour, what are deeds in arms,
 Unless injustice crown them by a smile ?
 Poor and unmeaning all ! Go seek this conqueror :
 Go, bid him hail the Eumenides.—They will twine
 Their snakes and scorpions for his manly brow,
 A wreath that well will grace it.

Capt. Away ! Is this a language which the weak
 Should hold towards the strong ? Best buy his friendship.

Gal. Perish his friendship !—

I would not buy it on the easiest terms :
 But rather dwell amid Hircanian wilds,
 My drink the dew-drop, and my food the berry,
 My bed the cold dank earth,—and for my clothing,
 The skins of beasts which least resemble him ;—
 All this were better than to call him friend.
 Go then,—to Dionysius bear my answer :
 I will not leave my dear, my honour'd parent.
 Your king boasts power ; but know, in strength, my
 father

Surpasses him by far—a thousand fold !
 His guards are Prudence, Fortitude, and Justice.
 Go ! bear my answer straight. We do not fear him.

Capt. This contumely your father's head may atone for.
[*Exit.*

Sim. He goes in anger; and will no doubt report
In all unfavourably of us.—O, Galatea!
Who would not be a father, if all children
Were like to thee! the very type of Heaven?—
I am of all who bear that name the happiest,
The proudest, and the greatest.—Men shall proverb
me!—

The sabre hangs across my neck, and yet
I would not change my state with any prince
However loud his fame—howe'er distinguish'd.
Enough, that Galatea is my daughter!

Gal. O cease this praise,—nor teach me to believe
That *duty* must be *merit*.

Marc. Be of good cheer:
Thy daughter's boldness may successful prove:
Submissiveness were ruin. Much I honour her;
Her heart yet speaks its anguish 'mid this courage.
Sweet Galatea! much, too much she suffers—
Be witness for me, all ye blessed host,
I seek not to expound the ways of Heaven,
Inscrutable to man.—And yet the mind,
Distracted long with complicated ills,
Is lost in doubt—in error's maze she wanders:—
Thinks Virtue should not be the sport of Fortune;
Sorrows at seeing her a poor, pale trembler,
While rosy Vice stands laughing at her side;
Then questions heavenly Justice, and repines
Unheeded of the future. Weak, weak humanity!
Maiden!—dismiss all fear of Dionysius.
Soon will mild Evening call bright Luna forth:
She, when thou once regain'st thy groves, will calm
Thy now too ruffled spirits. I must away,
To do a father's pleasure.

Gal. — Yes, 'twere indeed most charming,
To walk the margent of some rippling brook,
O'er-canopied with ozers thickly set;

While the night's Empress, that refulgent beauty !
 In her white mantle decorously clad,
 Paces it by us all majestic.
 To hear the lute-tongued, plaintive bird of even,
 Pour out his notes chromatic. O, 'twere ecstasy !
 Such as the vulgar soul, whose thoughts are earthly,
 Knows not, nor e'er can know—'tis all from Heaven !—
 Come, ever honour'd, we will once more gain
 Our peaceful dwelling—far from pomp and power.

Sim. That we be driven from it, kind Heaven fore-
 fend !

MARCELLUS enters, followed by the EVIL GENIUS.

Marc. In vain you tempt me : since to every pleasure,
 Save those which Heaven approves, my sense is dead.

E. Gen. Come, we will lead thee to the field of
 glory :
 The embattled field,—where Valour's sons contend
 For high renown :—the prize, a mighty empire !

GOOD GENIUS and Attendant Spirits enter.

Marc. Call you this glory ? far from me be such
 ambition.

G. Gen. He hath a valour to defend, not wrest
 From others their possessions. Soft Humanity,
 And all the manlier virtues, make *his* glory.
 Know, then, that War, aggressive War's not of them.

'

ZEPHON.

See where the god of battle comes !—
 Terror sits upon his brow :
 Rage augments his swelling veins.—
 Mark ! from forth his burning eye,
 Beanty lightnings flash around :
 Hark ! along the vaulted sky,
 His threats in deep-toned thunder sound.—
 Now he shakes his pondrous spear ;
 Yet hear, O Mars ! thy suppliant hear.

Let our lov'd sons in peaceful honours vie,
Go! and in vice-stained realms thy fierce and boasted
valour try.

And thou, Bellona, who wert wont
Across the embattled field to drive
Thy foaming coursers, urging still
Thy brother thro' the thickest fight,
The while fell Discord, rudely dight,
In tatter'd garments flies thy car before,
Her reeking garments stain'd, O dismal sight! with
human gore.

To thee we, fear-inspiring goddess, bend :
Awhile thy dread and cruelties suspend,—
Think on the orphan's piercing cries,
Think on the matron's streaming eyes,
Think on the dying father's speechless woe,—
O think on these, and yet forbear the blow.—

* * * *

Quick, from forth the blood-stain'd plain,
Turn thy chariot's falchion'd wheels :
O contemplate yon heaps of slain !
Think on the pangs each country feels ;
Whose sons, perhaps, of useful arts the nurse,
Now, mutually, pour forth the ban, the dire inhuman
curse

Marc. See ! Dionysius' captain comes to seek us.

Capt. O dread event ! the king our master's slain.

Marc. Slain, say'st thou—where, by whom ?

Capt. E'en in the temple's porch.

Some disaffected persons there laid wait :
Secure in numbers, menacing they met him.
After repeated blows the monarch fell,
His guard not interposing.

Marc. Dreadful end !

Yet common to the oppressor. But tell me, Captain,
How shew'd your master in this fatal moment ?

Capt. Like some poor shipwreck'd mariner he shew'd,
When, standing on a splinter'd, wave-wash'd rock,

Which each rude wind shakes at its utmost base,
And threatens with destruction! so seem'd he:
Trembling he view'd the storm,—yet stood its brunt,
Unknowing where to flee.—

G. Gen. Peace now is yours.
His son has virtues worthy of a throne:
They best can expiate all his father's crimes.
Convey these tidings to Simonides—
I deem the hut where honour dwells a palace—
Assure to him and Galatea safety,
The while ye ask them to unite with us,
In prayer to Heaven for the new monarch's welfare.—
For thee, Marcellus, think no more of war,
The life to which thou wert so late devoted.
A soldier's name thou hadst, and still must bear.
Yet all that appertains thereto is this—
That soon,—so very full of years is Marcus,—
Thy vows to *Hæres Martia* will be given.

Marc. But where is now my tempter—gone for ever?

G. Gen. Slunk to the den of night, fully discomfited.

Marc. Now, then, what praises shall to thee be given,
Thou minister of good, celestial tutor!—

G. Gen. I ask no praises—of thyself be proud;
For no compelling power hath Heaven assigned me.
Thou hast the fiery ordeal pass'd unhurt—
Sure proof of innocence; while thy sure reward,
On earth, is heartfelt joys; and ever after,
Raptures such as the soul can ne'er conceive,
Or e'er the tongue express. Farewell, blest mortal!
Now to the realms of light I wing my way,
Yet soon again will see thee, lov'd Marcellus:
Once more, farewell. Be virtuous and be happy!

ZEPHON, and other Spirits.

Glorious mortal!—to high birth
Add we now thine inborn worth:
Glorious mortal! now approv'd,
By all must thou be full belov'd.

O youth! thou nearly mayst compare,
With us, the denizens of air.
Much favour hadst thou at the hand
Of Abdiel, prince of our blest band;
Those ranks thou'lt join—when thy freed soul,
Through the vast space darts to its goal—
Where virtue dwells, and to renown
On earth acquir'd, presents the crown:
Immortal hands will then decree,
Gifts worthy her, and worthy thee!

THE END.

SOCRATES.

A DRAMA.

ON THE MODEL OF THE ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY.

ὦ πόλις, ὥς εὐτυχεῖς μάλλον καὶ καλῶς φρόνεις.—EUPOLIS.

THE ARGUMENT.

SOCRATES, on a charge of impiety brought against him by Anitus, priest of the temple of Ceres, and Melitus, member of the court of Areopagus at Athens, is thrown into prison. He is there visited by Apollodorus, Crito, and others, who make the chorus. They request him to concede somewhat to the opinions of the magistrates, and to those of the people, who appear enraged at his conduct. This he refuses: but afterwards allows a certain number of his disciples to leave him, in order to intercede with the judges in his favour. During the absence of these, divers of his friends arrive from the island of Delos, who inform him that they have bribed his guard; offering to assist him to escape to Sparta, a vessel being provided for that purpose, and then lying ready in the road. To this he peremptorily objects,—saying, that he is determined to stand trial for the crime of which he is accused, trusting entirely to the laws. The disciples of Socrates, who had gone to plead for him before the magistrates, return. They acquaint him that the Archons, who were appointed to investigate the matter, had declared the charge to be founded in malice, and had accordingly dismissed the cause, only laying on him a fine for his too great freedom of speech in regard to the religion of the country. Wholly dissatisfied with this, he contends that he must be either innocent or guilty: that in the first case the fine is arbitrarily imposed, and in the latter that the Archons must be ignorant or corrupt, since the crime of impiety is punishable with death. He then insists that the court of Areopagus shall take cognizance of the affair—he is carried before that court, who condemn him—when he takes poison in conformity to his sentence, and dies.

P R E F A C E.

THE performance here presented to the public has been written,—to borrow the language of Dr. Samuel Johnson,—“ Not in the soft obscurities of retirement, but amid inconvenience and distraction: in sickness and in sorrow.”—Great and terrible disadvantages. But the study of Poetry, it should be remembered, “ can relieve even the languor of *ill-health*, and sustain *poverty* herself under the scorn and insult of ungenerous pride.”* Cowley, indeed, has remarked of the art, that—“ There is nothing which requires so much serenity and cheerfulness of spirit: it must not be overwhelmed with the cares of life, or overcast with the clouds of melancholy and sorrow, or shaken and distracted with the storms of injurious fortune.”—But though, as before observed, I have enjoyed none of the comforts or conveniences so seemingly necessary to the Poet, I mean not, in speaking of the matter, to request indulgence for my production should it be unworthy of praise. If such be really its character, let it go—where indeed all

* See Horace, with the elegant comment of Bishop Hurd.

contemptible performances ought to go—let it only be found

In “vicum vendentem thus et odores.”

Some anachronisms occur in the drama. In particularizing one of these errors, I shall hope to make apology for all.—Socrates will be found speaking of the doctrines of Pyrrho, who lived in the 110th Olympiad: but this must not be objected to in a poetical performance. And it may further be remarked, that there is not the least necessity, in such a work, that *moral* and *historical* truths should always be found together: nor are the former the less forcible for any deviation from known chronology,—though this, by the way, has been brought in charge against Milton, in the *Samson Agonistes*, as may be seen in a critique which is given on it in the *Rambler*.

With respect to the invoking of the Pagan deities by the disciples of Socrates, and against which an objection might by some, perhaps, be hastily raised, as mixing Heathenism with the true religion,—an answer will be found in the speech that is given to the philosopher, in the drama.

The Chorus is composed of the friends and disciples of Socrates. The first person of it answers to the *Corypheus* of the ancients: sometimes speaking for himself, and at other times for the entire body,—*I* and *we* are therefore employed by him according to the circumstance. This I think proper to observe, in order that objections may not be made to their seemingly indiscriminate use.

The versification will sometimes appear harsh and inharmonious, if measured by the standard of the

modern rhymester; or by that of him, who in writing, what perhaps is called '*poetry*, is accustomed to count his fingers. In defence, however, of what I have practised, I shall quote a passage or two from the *Discours sur la Poésie* by the Chevalier Ramsay; and this the more especially, as it accords entirely with my own opinion on the matter.—“ Ce qui fait la poésie, ce n'est pas le nombre fixe et la cadence réglée des syllabes, mais le sentiment qui anime tout, la fiction vive, les figures hardies, la beauté et la variété des images. De plus, je ne sais si la régularité scrupuleuse de notre construction Européenne, jointe au nombre fixe et mesuré de pieds, ne diminuerait pas beaucoup l'essor et la passion de la poésie héroïque. Pour bien émouvoir les passions, on doit souvent retrancher l'ordre et la liaison. Voilà pourquoi les Grecs et les Romains qui peignaient tout avec vivacité et avec gout, usaient des inversions de phrases; leurs mots n'avaient point de place fixe; ils les arrangeaient comme ils voulaient. Les langues de l'Europe sont un composé du Latin, et des jargons de toutes les nations barbares qui renversèrent l'empire Romain. Ces peuples du nord glaçaient tout, comme leur climat, par une froide régularité de syntaxe. Ils ne comprenaient point cette belle variété de longues et de brèves, qui imite si bien les mouvemens délicats de l'âme. Ils prononçaient tout avec le même froid, et ne connaissent d'abord d'autre harmonie dans les paroles qu'un vain tintement de finales monotones. Quelques Italiens, quelques Espagnols ont taché d'affranchir leur versification de la gêne de rimes. Un poète Anglais, (Milton) y a réussi merveilleusement; et a commencé même avec succès d'introduire les inversions de phrases

dans sa langue. Peut-être que les Français reprendront un jour cette noble liberté des Grecs et des Romains."

I know not of any Drama on the Death of Socrates.* The subject has, indeed, been long since recommended to authors, by Addison, Diderot,† and others, and latterly, if I mistake not, by Mr. Cumberland, a gentleman of the most splendid abilities. The world had been happy in receiving the poem from his pen.

It was originally my intention to throw a few explanatory notes into the margin of the following pages, respecting allusions there made to the manners and customs of the ancient Greeks. But as most readers are acquainted with the history and mythology of that people, I afterwards thought that such *explications* might be deemed unnecessary, and accordingly relinquished the design.

The opinion which may be entertained of the fol-

* This is the more extraordinary, as his life was glorious,—if glory consists in virtue; and his death the same,—if fortitude—I had almost said Christian fortitude—can render it so. Socrates might have said with the Iphigenia of Euripides, and even with still greater propriety—

Ἐθρεψας Ἑλλάδι μέγα φῶς—

Θανούσα δ' οὐκ ἀνάλνομαι.—EURIP.

"Late the bright star of Greece—

But I, not murmuring, die."

† What Diderot felt, in regard to this subject, may be known by the following quotation:—

—"Il est une sorte de drame où l'on présenterait la morale directement et avec succès. C'est, par exemple, la mort de Socrate. Pour moi je pense que l'homme de génie qui s'en emparera, ne laissera pas aux yeux le temps de se sécher, et que nous lui devons un des lectures les plus instructives, et les plus délectables, que nous puissions faire.—Si l'on saisit bien le caractère ferme, simple, tranquille, serein et élevé du philosophe, on prouvera combien il est difficile à peindre. Je mourais content si j'avais rempli cette tâche comme je la conçois."—*De la Poésie Dramatique.*

lowing Poem, I am yet to learn. But whatever its merits or demerits may chance to be, I must certainly answer for them all. I have avoided looking into either Plato or Xenophon, lest peradventure I should *adopt* when it was wholly my desire to *invent*: in a word,—lest I should deliver any other sentiment or expression than my own. The present Drama is therefore built on the general character of Socrates, and not on any particulars in his philosophy as recorded by those celebrated Greeks, or by any other writer whatever. But as the work is now committed to the press, I shall possibly be led to a perusal of the above-mentioned authors, in order to see how far my ideas or sentiments may correspond with those of the distinguished ancient, whom I have here attempted to represent.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SOCRATES.

CHELONIS, Daughter of Socrates.

APOLLODORUS.

CRITO.

EVENUS.

CENAGORAS.

CRITIAS.

ADIMANTUS.

RAMPHIUS.

MEN of the ISLAND of DELOS.

CHORUS, Friends and Disciples of Socrates.

SCENE.—*A Prison in Athens.* THE TIME,—*Within the course of a natural day.*

S O C R A T E S.

A DRAMA.

SCENE—A PRISON.

SOCRATES *is discovered at the further end of it, lying on a couch or pallet of the rudest kind.*

CRITO *enters with APOLLODORUS and others, the friends and disciples of SOCRATES.*

Crito. O piteous state!—behold the first of men,
Whom Greece in all her glory well might honour,
'Mid pestilent vapours pent. His limbs with age
And shackles wearied, on a coarse pallet stretch'd!
Wait here, my friends, while I approach and say,
We come to soothe, if haply that may be,
His mind's affliction; to his body's, alas!—
Such is his tyrant's will—we dare not minister;
For he already is held as one whose life
Is forfeit to the state: a wretch condemn'd:
So foul, so heinous do they deem the crime
Of which he is accus'd,—*Irreverence to their gods.*—
Though they who thus proscribe him are the really
impious;
For he no Polytheist is, nor vain idolater;
But in the one true God believes, nor will admit another.
And now to greet—O, mournful greeting!—our revered
sage.
Yet let me not too hastily draw near,

Since oft in sweet and heavenly meditations,
 Whole days he passes, nor heeds his numerous ills.
 Such hallow'd reveries must not then be broken
 By rude startling speech.—That were a crime.
 Howe'er, I'll gently hail him—Hist, hist, Socrates!
 He answers not—but motionless he lies.
 Ah me! his manifold, frequent-repeated injuries,
 Have surely kill'd him. But hold, I'll speak again.
 What ho, there! Socrates!—He sleeps; the good man
 sleeps.

Apollodorus! mark well our honour'd teacher!—
 While dangers threaten, and malevolent tongues prevail
 Against him, clamorous, he, by the cherub innocence
 Cheer'd and protected, sinks into peaceful slumber.
 O enviable and most happy—happy amid misfortune!
 Strange paradox to those who sage philosophy's precepts
 Have ne'er imbib'd; but with the sottish multitude
 Grovelling and sensual, have worn their lives away,—
 Of real good and evil alike insensible,
 Monstrously ignorant, nor e'en of knowledge dreaming.
 But still this persecution, oh, ungrateful Greece! ;
 This the reward of him who so long has serv'd
 His country, urging her sons to virtue and justice:
 This dark, dank dungeon, these unseemly chains?
 O men of Athens! Gorgon-fronted war,
 Though sleeping now, has turn'd your hearts to stone:
 Yet 'mid your feasts and revels, could you see
 Goodness oppress'd, but calm, as here 'tis found,
 The flinty particles would sure fly off,
 And warm blood once more flow. Spirits of the just!
 Watch round his couch, and save him from deadly harms;
 And ye, superior of the celestial powers,
 Still shed your kindest influence on his head;
 Let not his noble fortitude be shaken,
 That when the fearful day of trial comes,
 He may encounter his enemies, to their confusion,
 Subdue them wholly: and by moral rectitude upheld,
 Shine forth a bright example to future ages.

CHORUS.

Well hast thou said, O son of Metrodorus!
Worthy disciple of so great a master.

Apoll. Yes, great beyond all parallel is our chief;
This first of heroes—conqueror of himself!
He from his breast hath every earthly passion
Or driven away, or hath subdued, as with his bright
Immaculate, holy spirit ill consorting.

CHORUS. .

How amiable and excellent be they who give their hours
To Contemplation, and her high compeer,
Pale-eyed Religion, in the lowly cell,
Unseen of pageant Pride.—That cell which she,
With look averted, passes in disdain;
Or if perchance compell'd to view it, stands,
Transfix'd and mute in terror—as though black Tar-
tarus

Had open'd wide its gates to give her entrance,
All hope of pleasure's e'er returning, lost!

Crito. O worst degeneracy, and impious! O shame,
that man—

Man who the whole material world surveys,
And even to scan things immaterial presumes,—
What shame, that one with such large powers endued,
With seraph soul, should, of the all-glorious Giver
Be thus neglectful—to whom are due, reverence and
submission,
Lowliest prostrations being in his sacred temples made.

CHORUS.

Heaven over all in justice bends;
On impious men its torments sends—
Torments not to the frame confin'd,
But preying deeply on the mind.

The furies whirl their torches on high,
 For avengement prepar'd—
 With their snakes all up-rear'd,
 On swift wing they fly
 To punish foul crimes—
 Impiety chiefest—
 This no pardon can find,
 Here or hereafter :
 Not even a remission is there of sufferings
 For those who Heaven's majesty condemn.
 But the Diræ advance—
 Intemperate Greece !
 Thy sons slumb'ring in peace,
 Soon shall wake from the trance,
 And find war in their breasts,—
 But which never can cease.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Awful and sublime is Deity !
 In his incomprehensibility greater.
 Goodness is manifest in all his works,
 Therefore unseen, unknown, is he to be worshipped.
 As he is omnipotent, so should we humble ourselves
 before him ;
 Not in the vain and wordy adoration of the multitude,
 But with heart-glowing piety, thankfulness, and truth.

Apoll. O that mankind might yet be taught to lead
 Like you, a life of virtue and of peace :
 What joys, what true ecstasies were theirs !
 Then each to each would a good genius be,
 Ready with lenient hand to afford relief,
 In all those ills which from our nature spring.

Evenus. In such a state, men were an honour to their
 nature.

Apoll. But far the greater part infuriate walk
 The earth's whole round, on all sides scattering fires,

At dread Bellona's torch enkindled.—Fiend-like appearing,

They who might appear as angels.

Crito. Much we in charity to example should impute,
Not turpitude of soul—sanction'd as they think by
ages!

Would men were sensible that that which they deem
strength is weakness!

CHORUS.

Immortal Power! make clear^d their hearts;
Give them to know the crime of war:
That Victory plum'd in her triumphal car,
Is nought but Vice set off by gorgeous arts.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Many there are who chase the phantom, Fame,
And pant along the sultry path of glory;
Glory! mistaken name—empty applause,
Thundered from throats ne'er made to swallow blood.
Tigers should growl their pæans, but not men;
No war but the defensive can be just.

CHORUS.

Martyr'd heroes!—for heroes ye may be enroll'd,
Who for the true faith have suffer'd—yours is glory!
Long shall ye live renown'd in story,
And aye in the Empyreum your stations hold,
'Mid starry influences, wide spread round the Source of
light,
Borrowing and giving splendour: though to the immea-
surable height
No mortal view can reach—nought save the spirit's ken.
How must the infidel shrink in utter dismay—
All hope of heaven foregone, and to despair a prey!

SOCRATES, turning on his couch.

Ah cruel men! but still my spirit's unbroken.

Apoll. Heard I not Socrates speak? He'll much rejoice

At seeing us here, though liberty we cannot bring him.

Crito. He knows not we are present. Sleeping he exclaim'd,

"Ah cruel men! but still my spirit's unbroken."

Conscious integrity!—yet in his dreams he wails
That persecution which but little affects him waking.

If such a strength of mind the Supreme can give,
Who'd not exchange his freedom for Socrates' manacles?

Even. You wept his fate, at entering,—his chains
and imprisonment.

Crito. 'Twas the first working of humanity, of nature:
I weep and envy him even at the self-same moment.
Mourn that such excellence should be the sport of
tyranny;

Then, marking his dove-like mildness, wish for his fetters,
If with those fetters such resignation and piety,
Such sweet complacencies might fill my bosom.

CHORUS.

Friends, ye have well approv'd yourselves to Heaven.

To teach the doctrines of this god-like man

Were highest honour; and with your gentler nature,

Must better accord than to be Fortune's followers.

Go then, and through the world, a world degenerate,

Spread wide his moral laws, his virtuous precepts,—

So shall ye be known of all, by all admir'd,

He the great delegate of heaven, and you

The ministers to aid its sacred purposes:

For Socrates' bodily powers all weaken'd are

By the soul's great exertions. He will be little seen

Henceforth of man,—should he escape from his oppressors.

Apoll. The will is strong in us, but our ability
May well be question'd in a task so arduous.

CHORUS.

From such a school, how should you fail convincing?

Crito. Alas! we want the master's persuasive language.

CHORUS.

Too great a diffidence were equally blameable
With a too great presumption. Take courage, then,
The noble cause will inspirit ye—for 'tis yours
Not to slay men, but to give peace and comfort
To their afflicted bosoms, as God's Vicegerents!
Though Tyrants, ever on horrid war intent,
Impiously assume the title.

Apoll. You urge aright.
The task were hard, but glorious. We'll essay it.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

The generous mind feels a true pleasure,
In pointing out to mistaken men
The paths of pure religion and virtue:
Of unsubornable integrity and honour:
Of immutable justice and truth.—

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

O, may our Athenian youth
A proud distinction claim!—
Not in the noisy show or course,
But the still groves of Academe;
For there, and only there, can they acquire a lasting
name.

Apoll. 'Twas in those groves, so form'd for meditation,
That first I heard the voice of Socrates—
That voice whose sounds still vibrate on mine ear,

And there will vibrate ever——
 Like music's cadence floating on the winds,
 From forth his lips the mildest accents came:
 The good of human kind invariably his object.
 Such love and harmony must be indeed of Heaven
 The pure and proper growth: not earth-engendered.—
 At his discourse—a future state the theme—
 Our trembling nature takes a firmer tone,
 Our spirits more fine and subtiliz'd become—
 The rapt soul is in Elysium.

Crito. 'Tis most true: all feel
 Alike that influence; and stand astonish'd
 At his supernal powers.—But see, he wakes,
 He rises from the couch. All hail to Socrates!
 We, thy disciples, countrymen, and friends,
 With these of the neighbouring nations and the isles,
 And even of distant Ionia—deeply distress'd
 At the foul injuries thus heap'd upon thee,
 Are come to know if thou hast aught to impart to us
 Touching the alleged offence: aught that might abate
 Thine enemies' rancour—or if in that failing,
 Something that might, perchance, induce our magis-
 trates,
 From out this noisome prison-house to free thee
 To wholesomer air, or, it might be, to liberty.

Apoll. Such is our liveliest hope! And oh! do thou
 Inform us fully in what best we may serve thee.

Soc. Your goodness distresses me more than my
 enemies' malice.

O, friends! remember of what I stand impeach'd,
 Irreverence to the gods of mighty Greece.
 The priest of Ceres' temple brings the charge,
 And I do not impugn it. To save my life,
 I must renounce the ever-living God,
 And give my better part to deep perdition.
 No! not for youth restor'd, with every grace
 The poets feign for Bacchus or Apollo,
 Not for Minerva's wit, or Mars's valour,

Even every excellence the people give
 Fondly, and to their whole round of divinities—
 In this plurality no crime, indeed,
 Were they, even as by us, invoked and held but symbols
 Of the Godhead's attributes, and therefore reverenc'd—
 No, not for wealth or power would I shut out
 The light that beams on my once clouded breast:
 The light of Heaven! for such I truly find it.

Apoll. The hope of yet preserving thee we cannot
 abandon.

Crito. Thy foes, thou say'st, are implacable: not so
 the judges:

These we may well suppose will seek the acquittal
 Of him whose moral lessons they have oft received,
 Although his religious creed they reject with scorn.

Soc. In that particular you greatly err;
 Many, like the people, are violently bent against me;
 Nay, know there is of Arcopagus' court,
 Who joins with my accuser.

Apoll. Can it be so?—But we will hence, and use
 All intercession for thee with the magistrates;
 But not to rest our cause wholly on entreaty,
 Nor yet too much on their favour relying, or pity—
 Some of them, as thou think'st, exasperate against
 thee,

For what, in their great error, they pronounce ungod-
 liness—

We beg thee send by us some soothing message,
 Some expiatory words that may take off
 The edge of their severity, now wounding thee sorely.

•*Soc.* Forbear, forbear—Think but on what ye ask.

Crito. 'Tis less for thee than for ourselves we ask it.
 That life thou deem'st of little worth, to us
 Inestimable is. On it we build our happiness.

Soc. On ground deceitful and insecure you build.
 With nerves unstrung, a pulse scarce known to beat,
 In fewer words—palsied all o'er by time,
 I rather court than shun the death for me prepar'd. ;

Crito. Pardon our weakness; we are mere fleshly men,
And not like thee, all spirit!

Even. We murmur not
At Nature's laws; but it behoves us well,
If possible, from criminal death to save thee.

Apoll. We go: of our strength with the foe resolv'd
on trial.

Soc. Take heed ye involve not yourselves in my
misfortune.

CHORUS.

Fly, much-lov'd brethren, fly!
Let no vain fears your course impede;
Trust the great Power that rules on high,
Well pleas'd he'll view the glorious deed,
And grant, O envied grant! immortal honour for your
meed.

SEMI-CHORUS.

All earthly censure disregard,
Enough the breast from guilt is free;
Remember too the bright reward,
Reserv'd for saintly charity,
The while in bliss you dwell with the celestial hierarchy!

Soc. They are gone, and at the hazard
Of their own personal safety,
To sue for hapless indigence,
Beset with innumerable ills.—
Yet what can their influence avail me
With the people, or even with the magistrates,
Amenable as I am to received laws,
Proscribed in every quarter as an unbeliever:
Denounced as an enemy to the state,
Held a corrupter likewise of Attica's sons:
In fine, a delinquent of the blackest hue.
Whom therefore they are impatient to punish
Capitally and ignominiously.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Ah! too rigorous fate!
 But not virtue sky-born
 And sun-bright can dispel
 The thick, dark mists of hell,
 Which envelop gaunt envy and hate:
 Thus immask'd, and in seeming security,
 They direct their empoison'd arrows
 Against the best and noblest quarry.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Alas! for Socrates: yet he's in all unruffled—
 Patience herself might learn of him to suffer.

CHORUS.

With the infirmities incident to age,
 Tormenting pains of the body:
 But by Heaven's grace few of the mind,
 He bends to its high will resign'd:
 To HIM who all griefs can assuage.

Soc. Most excellent men! say, how shall I requite ye?
 Or you or they, now absent, who boldly plead for me.—
 For though I wish'd not this, their goodness appears in it.—
 Friendship! to thee whole hecatombs are due,
 And I have nought to offer.—Yet I am here
 Of power offended the unresisting victim:
 This immolation, Greeks! your gods demand.
 Then bid the priest and soothsayer make ready
 Perhaps my heart laid bare will better tell,
 Than could my lips, the unfeign'd love I bore
 Both to my God and country.
 Come, straightway bring the garland: deck my brow.
 Then lead me forth. In this design'd disgrace
 I can find only honour.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

He dies in faith, and for it.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Such worth can never die.
 And when translated to the blest abodes,
 No brighter nor more glittering star shall shine
 On the blue brow of heaven.

Cen. Sec what a courage divine philosophy gives :
 Oh, may our friends succeed in their great effort !
 But should they fail, what then remains for us ?
 Must hope then be dismiss'd ! Oh, frail reliance !
 When hope's abandoned, farewell Socrates !
 Distressful thought—on what can I determine ?——
 O mind ! O spirit ! that ever wakeful seem'st,
 Apparently intelligent, and yet,
 In those things which concern us most, most doubtful :
 Say what thy essence ? If ethereal, why
 Are we poor mortals lost in wild uncertainty ?
 Why, even when virtue prompts our sluggish nature,
 Are we so oft seen pauseful, unresolv'd ?
 Letting the good man perish, ere we bring
 The aid he stands in need of ? still inquiring ?
 'Tis an enigma doth perplex me strangely.
 Sometimes I wish to solve it, then again
 Think ignorance may perchance be chiefest happiness :
 For what our erring reason deems as best,
 Is oftentimes found to be the greatest ill ;
 And what we boldly have set down for evils,
 Are but precursors to some sovran good,—
 Sent to make trial of our excellence chiefly, .
 To prove our fortitude when dangers threaten :
 So that the All-powerful may deal by us as we
 Shall best approve ourselves, in his true judgment.

Soc. But who are these now crowding the prison's avenue,
 Their steps, if I mistake not, hither tending :
 What should their errand be ?

CHORUS. .

Perhaps to tamper with thee,

Thy accusers, fearful a too rigorous-proceeding,
 May raise up indignation in the breasts
 Of the generous few, who in thy favour have appeared.

Soc. No, rather the priest and Arcopagite in concert,
 Some further persecution have devis'd me.—
 O Anitus ! O Melitus ! O salvage men !
 What untried miseries would ye I should suffer ?
 Yet wherefore say I miseries, when the Eternal
 Has such a strength of soul to many given,
 That they have smiled amid the sharpest torments
 Which giant despotism did on their bodies wreak
 In wanton rage,—all human ordinance disregarding.
 Should lesser sufferings like mine then ever be mur-
 mur'd at ?

'Twas Nature spoke : but I no more will hear
 Her fond complainings,—I will again be Socrates !

CHORUS.

Favour'd of Heaven ! yet cheer thee : for as I guess,
 Those we descried are friends, not enemies :—
 Such, as they nearer approach, their hasty pace,
 And joyous look bespeak them. They are here.
 Whence, and what would ye, Greeks ? For though un-
 known,
 Your habit speaks you such—what brings ye hither ?

First Del. Of Delos we ; like you, the friends of Socrates.
 His prison-doors stand open, we have bribed
 The guards on every side.—Escape is certain.
 Haste to Piræus : in that port now lies
 A bark, by us retain'd, of many oars,
 Her prow already turn'd towards the main,
 And every eager rower at his station :
 Straight shall it waft thee to Laconia's shore.—
 In Lacedemon thou wilt find protection,
 Although a rival state ; to virtue's lustre,
 Her eye is open. Sparta takes the jewel,
 Which Athens in her folly throws away.

CHORUS.

Most generous Delians !——
 Ever, O ever honour'd be your name !
 But let us fly this place with lightning's speed :
 No time for thanks, though much your merits claim them.

Soc. Many may think your zeal deserving praise ;
 But I can only blame it as too forward.
 I grieve to find my moral system spurned
 By you who might improve it—Ethics first taught
 By sage Melanthius, at whose name I grateful bend.
 Our canon law is virtue ; *good* is such,
 But good must not be gain'd by practising evil,
 Although no other mean were left to reach it.
 On this I have insisted oft ; and now repeat,
 Albeit it wars against my proper interests—
 Against my very being, corporeally consider'd.

Del. We own, nay highly venerate that principle :
 From it have never swerv'd, and now maintain
 That what we meditate is good, unmix'd of evil.
 It cannot be ill, to rescue suffering worth
 From the dire fangs of tiger-like ambition,
 Found in the temples ; since our priests hold rank
 With Kings and mightiest Emperors—Anitus chief,
 At whose power the superstitious Athenians tremble.
 Should thy new creed prevail, that power were lost,
 And he from his high eminence thrown down disgraced.
 Thence all his rancour—thence he seeks to involve
 Thee, and thy followers in one common ruin.

Soc. Think me not, men of Delos, now insensible
 To this your perilous enterprise and proffer'd service :
 It is that a perfect sense of right and wrong,
 From earliest years deep in my breast implanted,
 Compels me the act to censure, though good the impulse.
 You say in possessing freedom there cannot be ill.
 Taken abstractedly, the position then is just,
 Self-evident, an axiom none dispute :

Freedom of body, as of mind hath charms—
 Yet, in the circumstance in which I find myself,
 To win that liberty, so wish'd for, by other means
 Than what the law admits, were criminal.
 Now when in Athens' court I make defence,
 And state my principles, evince their pureness,
 The law that might condemn, will then acquit me,
 And proselytes be mine. But why say mine,
 When 'tis the glory of the Most High I stand for?
 Should I desert my post in the hour of danger,
 It would to our adversaries new triumph give,
 And farther be held a tacit proof of weakness.
 But of Heaven's champions this must not be whisper'd.
 Friends! This alone for me remains.—I conquer or
 I perish.

CHORUS.

Further to urge the matter, now, were useless.

First Del. He is too scrupulous thus to reject our
 succour,

And trust his life with prejudice and passion.

Second Del. He thinks the laws will shield him—fond
 delusion!

They will be made to bend to his destruction.

Even. Nought can appal him in his career of glory;

No threats, no perils!—Bethink ye what is glory—

I speak not of the airy meteor priz'd

By Mars' sons, who rush mid bleeding ranks—

But that resplendent star which sheds its light,

Equal and steadily,—its orbit, virtue:

Whose phasis full and beauteous, draws all eyes,

Though not, alas! by all alike esteem'd,—

For there are some who view it as a marvel,

A comet's blaze, which doth excite their wonder,

Not known to them its properties or species.

Mark well, my friends, this planet in its motion,

See how undeviating it pursues its way;

How true its revolution! still returning
 To the same point from which it first set out,—
 The point of rectitude.—Mark this, compatriots;
 Think how it cheers us in the dull gloomy hour,
 The darkest souls enlight'ning—or, if enlightened,
 Urging them ever forward, and propelling
 Our best propensities to noblest doings.

First Del. So shows indeed true glory.—But for
 Socrates,

He basely is betray'd. It were no excellence
 To stoop to our enslavers, or place the whip
 In persecution's hand prepar'd to scourge us.

Second Del. 'Twas ever held, that in unequal fight
 Retreat were best—nay, it may e'en be glorious.

Soc. Your arguments are specious:—but my soul
 Still prompts me to more honourable trial.

CHORUS.

See where a female comes, whose downcast eye,
 Clasp'd hands, and pallid cheek, denote her woe:
 And now she makes a pause, as seeming doubtful
 If to proceed or measure back her way.—
 Her trembling limbs can ill sustain her:—see, she
 swoons—

Haste to her aid, O countrymen! for sure
 'Tis some dear relative or friend of Socrates.

Soc. Ill can mine ear be open'd to female bewailments;
 But in distress our best assistance should be given.

CHORUS.

Hither, I pray you, lead the drooping fair one;
 Let her a while recline upon this couch.

Chel. There is no need—my spirits are returning fast.

Soc. Chelonis? My daughter!

Chel. Renounce, despise me:

I am, alas! degenerate, disobedient:
And undeserving to be call'd thy daughter.

First Del. In what degenerate? How disobedient?
Unknown to us thy features, but thy fame
Long since has reach'd our country. Why undeserving?

Chel. O worthy stranger! that you shall determine:
A strict injunction had I from my father,
Not to approach these walls 'till the decision
Of our supreme tribunal were known concerning him.
Yet see me here,—in open disobedience.
But how, you say, degenerate? 'Tis that in coming,
Thus interdicted,—yet in hope to assuage
The dolours of a parent,—I have weakly,
O woman's weakness!—to his aching bosom
Given new conflicts. At this prison's gloom,
The fortitude so vaunted in the schools,
Which I believ'd was mine, instantly fled me:
Fled like a vision—fancy's bodiless creature!
I sunk beneath my terrors: sunk disgraceful,
When that a strength of mind, as well as body,
The most were wanted, to soothe and to relieve him.
O pusillanimity! O abject Chelonis!
Unworthy child of such a noble father.

Del. Amiable woman! of yourself you judge
Much too severely; what you deem disgraceful,
Shows in you goodliest: nay, is highest honour.
Your *disobedience* proves—you know your duty,
(This I maintain, howe'er opposed the terms)—
And all the stoic firmness failing in you,
Marks love and gentleness—right female ornaments.

Chel. 'Almost you reconcile me to myself;
But still your argument is in part fallacious,
Since to transgress against a father's mandate
Calls for much censure—pure though my motive might be.
He had, no doubt, some powerful reason for it,
Not to be known by me.—And yet my anguish—
His wish alone should guide me.—And yet his sufferings—

O, I am lost in doubt!—To stay or go
Were equal misery. Direct me, Heaven!

Soc. My much-lov'd Chelonis! But to the throne of
Grace

I bend with all humility and thankfulness,
That to my offspring is such excellence given.

CHORUS.

A more than human excellence. Wondrous woman!
The only representative of Socrates,
Accept our homage as of inferior beings;
And if within our compass there be aught
That might the least avail thee—oh, declare it!
Slaves to thy virtues: in all command us freely.

Chel. Too much your judgment is in my favour bias'd,
And yet, perhaps, your praise might make me vain,
But that I little merit can discover
In acts of piety by Heaven enjoin'd us,
And the first law of nature only obeying:—
Though to fail in them were with me high criminal.
But since amid my griefs you would indulge me
In all your influence reaches—this I ask,
Procure me leave to dwell within this prison:
O let me here be fix'd, in the fit office—
For what more fit than to watch o'er a parent,
Aged and full of sorrows—mightiest sorrows!—
Yes, let me here be station'd, here remain,
To catch the tender glances of his eye,
To mark the quick pulsation of his heart,
Which thanks me for my duty. It is for this,
This sweetly painful office, I would live.

Soc. Happy old man!—

Of such a daughter and such friends possess'd.
Who would not gladly wear these galling chains,
To taste my raptures? Chains! they are silken robes,
Encircling Persia's monarch. Xerxes' self,
Amid his banquets, never knew such joys.

As those your presence yields. But I need quiet.—
 These pleasures more affect my feeble frame
 Than did my griefs : for they, though great, were tranquil.

Del. Yet once more, Socrates, we pray thee, think
 On our late proffer'd aid. Abandon Athens !

Fly from her persecution !—Or if that
 Induce thee not, as touching thine own person,
 Yet save thy country from disgrace and shame :
 O save her from herself !—from the foul crime
 Which now she meditates.—For sure that misery
 She seeks to bring on thy defenceless head,
 Will prove her own ; full heavily will she feel it.

Chel. O speak again. Say, can you give my father
 The liberty sò wish'd for : the wide freedom ?

Del. The same that Eleutherius' self might give him.

Chel. And can this be ? have you indeed such power ?
 My brain's affected with transcendent bliss !—
 I've heard o' th' joys of madness, now I know them.
 But quick inform me, how should he escape ?

Del. Know we have gain'd his guard to assist us in it,
 And at the haven's farthest point now lies
 A well-mann'd vessel, by ourselves brought thither.
 Another Argonautic band we came,
 Not they more eager for the golden prize,
 Than we for ours. But still the dragon honour,
 Watchful, has frustrated our best endeavours :
 Nought can lay him asleep—no power subdue it.
 We yield to Socrates, in all unconquerable.

Chel. Cruel, inexorable, nay, mistaken honour !
 Yet let thy daughter join her fond entreaties
 To those thy friends have used. Think on thy danger :
 Envy and malice ever hovering round thee,
 While vengeance draws her knife to give the blow ;
 Shun then the coming evil ;—Death approaches.
 O instant save us—save thyself, thy Chelonis !

Soc. Ah me ! is this thy language ? death and evil ;
 Reason has surely left thee. Fly from death !
 What, in the sight of Heaven, thus recreant prove ?

When glory might be mine—substantial glory?
 Have I not taught thee—*Life is the soul's death*.
Death the soul's life?—Which then should most be
 coveted?

Or shall we, like to Pyrrho, doubt, though certainties
 Are by the voice of Nature loud proclaim'd?
 For though a spirit informs this mortal body,
 Not seen, yet seeing, not palpable, yet real,—
 It cannot, thus pent up, be said to live—
 Albeit its powers appear in glorious efforts—
 But when it once attains the highest heaven,
 Its proper element—'tis then it lives,
 Unmix'd with grosser matter—pure, ethereal!
 Why forward springs the soul with double force,
 At thought of high emprise? Why fearless walk
 Sole amid perils, as by an host protected?
 Why, but its strength 's of heaven; proof adamantine
 'Gainst Vice and all her horrid train of hell,
 In perfect phalanx brought—seemingly invincible.
 It may be ask'd, by those inclined to cavil,—
 Whence, if the spirit partake thus of divinity,
 Should it know evil, since evil is not of heaven?
 No! 'tis of earth. But though the souls of all men
 Receive like emanation from above,
 And it may be like powers, they have free agency,
 And ever by Vice or Virtue are found assailable:
 Our actions are our own; they take their birth
 In worldly affections; and we for them must answer
 To Him who speaks in thunder, and who calls us,
 At his high will, from this probationary state.

CHORUS.

Long have we felt the force of all thy arguments
 On that great point, the soul's eternal happiness:
 Long have acknowledged all the sacred truths
 That issued from thy lips. But now we urge
 Thy bodily safety: now, when fell injustice
 Has raised her powerful hydra-head against thee.

Soc. I have already spoken on this matter.
I will submit me to the laws of Athens.
They must decide this question. Are ye answered?

Chal. My ever honour'd parent!
Thou speak'st as though Astrea ruled on earth,
And not the tyrant man, the slave of passion.

Soc. Our courts display no tyranny, nor passion:
With individuals these, indeed, are found—
Witness the present conspiracy against me,
Aided by Lycon and others, Melitus' partisans;—
But then these men condemn not—'tis the law:
Further,—my flight would into guilt be interpreted,
And the good name I seek were gone for ever,
Greatly although you labour'd to remove the stigma.
Let not this be, my friends!—you cannot wish it:
Your silence proves you do not. Once more hear me;
I trust my cause with God and with my country.
And this my consolation and my pride,
In either case—come life or death—I triumph!

Del. Mysterious Virtue! But since thou art of heaven
First-born, well may thy ways appear inexplicable,
And men stand lost in wonder, as at immensity.

CHORUS.

We by thy wisdom will be in all directed.

Soc. My wisdom, say ye? ah! too partial countrymen:
The golden tripod not to me belongeth.

CHORUS.

To whom then should it as of right be given?
Have we not heard the oracle's responses:
Do we not know the Pythia hath pronounced thee
The wisest of the Greeks?—The tripod's thine.

Soc. Pray lead me to my couch. These limbs require
Some little rest.

Chel. Rest: and on that hard pallet?

Soc. A bed of lightest gossamer 'twill be,
When thou, my dearest Chelonis, hast prepared it.

Del. Here cease we then awhile all importunities.
Our hope may be suspended: relinquish it we cannot.
Retire:—our prayers shall now be offer'd up for thee.

CHORUS.

Come, Somnus, touch him with thy rod, and lull
His senses for a while in sweet forgetfulness:
And, Morpheus, lend thine aid in such kind dreams
As haply may recruit his wearied spirits.
At distance we our orisons will hold,
Nor interrupt his slumbers, now so needful!

Del. Nay, even the flinty back of that wide couch
Will seem soft while he sleeps.

Chel. And I will here,
Even in this place, this garden of the Hesperides—
For such it now doth seem to me—keep vigil,
Guarding the golden fruit so highly valued;
And he must be indeed a true Alcides,
Who bears away the inestimable treasure.
Yes, my most dear, my heaven-inspir'd parent,
Thee I'll protect—even as the watchful bird
Protects her callow brood:—while these thy friends,
Will faithful prove, and give, in need, assistance.
Yes,—Greece alone has power to tear thee from me:
That power I'll resist, nor dare endeavour it.—
To Areopagus' court I bow submissive.
But to my watch;—for much I fear the treachery
Of Anitus and Melitus. Their base cowardice
Would—as I gather from some recent circumstances—
Rather in secret take my father's life,
Than leave him to a fair and open trial.—
There he might—great though the prejudice against
him—
There he might find acquittal: and their combin'd cunning

Would not, perchance, again be able
 To catch him in the springe. Yet thus to attempt
 His death indeed were cruel, and doubly murderous.
 But what will not mistaken zeal incite to?
 What crime will false religion fail to perpetrate,
 Join'd with a growing hatred of men's virtues?
 But peace, my heart! awhile suspend thy sorrowings.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Now to mind-creating Jove
 Grateful let us homage pay.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

He from the starry realms above,
 Will lean to hear our votive lay.

CHORUS.

Great Supreme! by whom we live,
 To thee, well-pleas'd we fealty give:
 Straight shed thy kind paternal grace
 On these, the first of mortal race.
 Hear us, O Father! hear our prayer:
 And make this country still thy care.
 Let even-handed Themis here preside,
 Illustrious maid! of heaven and earth the pride.

First Del. Say, men of Athens, on what should we
 resolve?

What course pursue with this untractable man:
 This foe to himself, his relatives and disciples—
 He who from a persuasion too nice and scrupulous
 Rejects the good we offer, and makes choice of ill?

Second Del. His argument, touching the law, is wholly
 delusive;
 The law, in the case of impiety, cannot be departed
 from:
 Death it pronounces:—nor can there be hope for
 Socrates,—

The charge, however false, by Ceres' priest
Is sworn so firm and solemnly against him.

First Del. His opinions make us seemingly inconsistent ;
I speak of those which regard his own personal welfare.
They dazzle ; and our reason stands undetermined.
One hour, perhaps, they have our full approval,
The next, Humanity steps in and tells us,
They are by far too stern, by much too stubborn.

Cen. I marvel Chelonis hath no influence with him :
A daughter with Athena's wisdom blest,
Blooming as youthful Hebe, and in cheerfulness—
But till this fatal moment—nearly rivalling
Bright-eyed Aglaia, loveliest of the Graces.

Even. He loves this daughter with all a parent's
fondness ;
But still celestial affections engage him principally.

CHORUS.

I think his soul already emancipated is,
Unlike to those of other men which wait
The body's dissolution for such great change.
Highly impatient he seems thus acting in matter,—
Matter alone may 'be perchance endow'd with con-
sciousness—

Or it may be, some portion of the spirit
Is yet remaining to produce intelligence :
For that it is divisible we may well believe ;—
And this a retrospect of human kind will lead us to :
The various passions of each inducing it more fully.

Even. Divine has Socrates been styled : and justly.

Del. Yes, if an elevation of mind, with corporal wants
The fewest, perhaps, that Nature hath ever known,
Deserve the title, then to him be it given.

Cen. And yet I find in him a tinct of mortality :
Have oft observ'd his griefs will seek relief
In short complainings ;—yet I state not this,
As being in aught derogatory of his character ;
It shows him to be man ; yet still distinguish'd

By great endowments, by every positive excellence :—
In fine, set supereminently high above his fellows !

CHORUS.

His lamentation sometimes is call'd forth
By the scarce parallel'd malice of his accusers :
He grieves more for the foe, than for himself he's grieved.

First Del. Behold the beauteous mourner, where she
 kneels

Beside her father's couch : and doubtless offering
Her supplications for him to the Most High,
The All-wise, the All-bountiful ! from whom are all things.

Second Del. She rises : and her tears so fast are flowing,
Another Arethusa she doth seem.

First Del. See Grief in all her majesty ! That form
Were surely such as Phidias or Praxiteles
Would choose to model after—truly Grecian !

Second Del. Yea, truly Grecian ;—rightly dost thou
 say it.

For Greece, in arts and arms, is yet unrivall'd.

Chel. Can Nature, trembling Nature, long sustain
This dreadful conflict ? O, how contending passions
Rage and ferment within my full-swoln bosom.
I see my father sinking to the earth :
Hope comes in view, and tells me I may save him.
Anon pale Fear steps in with doubtful visage ;
Then black Despair, a dagger in his hand,
Points to his bleeding corse—a world of ruin !
Sure this uncertainty will lead to madness.

CHORUS.

Patience, ye gods ! O arm her yet with patience.
Let not Affliction's agonizing smart
Destroy a being so virtuous and lovely.

Chel. Why am not I the daughter of Affliction ?
Stoics would murmur, knew they griefs like mine.

CHORUS.

Full well we know that Misery loves to dwell
 Unseen of human kind, and to relate
 Her sufferings to the like complaining Echo :
 The while, by all-creative Fancy's aid,
 She sees new horrors mingling with the old.
 But 'tis the task of friendship—pardon, lady,
 The freedom our regard alone can warrant—
 To watch with nicest care her every action,
 To show the path which leads to brighter prospects,
 To Hope's fair mansion, and the abode of Peace.

Chel. Friends! I can own the weakness of my sex,
 Full oft susceptible of fancied evils :
 Not such my present state. My grief's so vast,
 So woe-worn am I, and my prospects all
 So thick and clouded, that I scarce descry
 Aught which can give me even a glimpse of hope,—
 Hope! the poor wretches' comfort and support.

CHORUS.

Ye powers! 'if virgin purity's your care,
 Defend this noble, this true-hearted woman
 Against the dire mischances which still seem
 To threaten her with ruin. Give her to know
 That 'tis Adversity alone can try us :
 'Tis she who probes us to the quick, and lays
 Our bosoms open to the world's keen eye :
 'Tis then our nature's known :—for all alike
 Look fair and glittering in more prosperous days.

Chel. Greeks! I had once a brother. You remember,
 Doubtless, his worth; all Athens must remember it :
 O that he still had liv'd! In this distress,
 A brother's death may well be doubly wail'd :
 He would have full aveng'd our cruel wrongs.

CHORUS.

He fell in battle ; On Potidæa's plain,
If right my memory serves.

Chel. No, 'twas at Delium,
Where far-fam'd Alcibiades was seen.
There, too, my father fought, and saved that hero
When dangers the most imminent press'd on him—
He rescued Alcibiades—generous deed !

CHORUS.

Father and son alike have prov'd their valour.

Chel. The thought of these might make me pant for
glory.

Begone, then, womanly complainings—hence !
Come, arm me, Fortitude ! and doubly steel my breast,
That I no more in unavailing anguish
May pass the coming hours. Aid me, ye gods,
That I, the fond child of a poor old man,
May yet devise some means by which to give
Him, wretched, to his more wretched relatives.
O, shade of my dear brother, hear my vow !
May misery for ever be my lot :
May every ill the Fates from their dread storehouse
Deal out to mortals, be my only portion,
If I pursue not these degenerate men—
These foes to Nature—Anitus and Melitus—
With dire Alecto's fury !—Yet tell me, am I mad ?
My reason says I am. Resolve me, friends.

CHORUS.

Her reason says it !—Now, alas ! I fear—
This language speaks, indeed, a mind distraught.
Dear lady, think—

Chel. O, you would talk of patience !
 Shall I be patient as the dove, and sit
 Drooping and mourning while despoil'd of all,—
 Of every comfort ? No ! be vengeance mine !—
 Though in my veins the blood of Socrates flows,
 I cannot now be calm. My brother's spirit
 Possesses me wholly :—bids me save a father !
 Yet how effect it ? O my tortur'd brain !
 I must be son and daughter to him,—both,
 For Lampocles, poor ill-starr'd youth, is dead.

FIRST, SEMI-CHORUS.

Ah ! what can calm the troublous mind ?
 Ah ! what can drive away despair—
 (The fiend hung round with daggers bare)—
 That loves to seize on human kind :
 That loves—dire Madness ever at his call—
 The wisest and the best most frequent to enthrall.

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

Is there can soothe this fair one's woe ?
 Attune to choral song the lyre :
 Let the harmonious measure flow
 Gently, and peaceful thoughts inspire.
 Music's sweet sounds e'en brutal rage can quell :
 As poets in sweeter strains full oft have lov'd to tell.

* * * *

CHORUS.

Thanks, friends ! yet cease the strain,
 Your efforts all are vain :
 Nought, nought can give relief,
 • Fix'd is her grief—
 Irremediable quite,
 Unless, O Fount of Light !
 That rul'st with hand unseen this æther ball :
 • Father and King of all !

Unless to thee it may seem fit
 Her sufferings to remit.
 "Uncertain aid!" men cry; and yet,
 Shall these, with bold licentious tongue,
 Proclaim each mighty wrong,
 Which Heaven, to their weak sense,
 Unceasing doth dispense,
 Regardless, as they think, to whom just punishments
 belong.
 'Tis in corporeal pain
 That some do most complain;
 And not in mental ill,
 Which doth the affections kill—
 This they know not, or knowing, well sustain.
 While the bright soul, susceptible of woe,
 Sinks at each blow,
 The Fates deal rudely. Then, Antæus like,
 Rises with new found strength: prepares to strike,
 But quickly yields to the all-powerful and pitiless foe.

Chel. Well have you touch'd my state. The giant
 strength
 I lately boasted dies: my grief's Herculean.
Cen. What mean these shouts, these songs? And now
 the sound
 Of Orthian music breaks upon mine ear.
 Ah! see our friends return, and in their train,
 A throng of citizens—no doubt triumphant:
 The pipes and timbrels speak their joy. But, hark!
 The measure changes: and the Doric mood
 So lov'd of Socrates, awakes the lyre.
 This proves we conquer—yes, this manly strain
 Denotes the school which first declar'd such harmony
 Alone were worthy of the name of *Greek*:
 Alone were such as Athens' sons should cultivate.—
 For it may be remark'd, that not unfrequent
 In the prevailing melody is found
 A nation's character—or great or abject:

Valorous in freedom, but in slavery fearful. —
 But our associates come. From every throat
Io triumphe! pours with loud acclaim.

Even. Apollodorus! Crito! welcome to us:
 Most welcome all! for sure you bring glad tidings.

Apoll. We have prevail'd: and Socrates is free. —
 The charge against him was laid capitally, as being
 A base Iconoclast, and highly impious, —
 New deities worshipping, and by subtle arts
 Striving to gain the people to his doctrines.
 Such accusations by the court of Archons
 Must first be consider'd, and as to them they appear,
 Or true or false, are then rejected or receiv'd.
 Now, on our testimony given, this charge
 Was by the magistrates pronounc'd malicious;
 Nor would they on those grounds admit of trial —
 Yet on his too free speech they pass'd a censure,
 And further fine him for it in sixty minæ.

Cen. Suing for Socrates, you incurr'd much danger;
 Since for suppos'd guilt thus becoming the advocate,
 You might have well been implicated in it.

CHORUS.

No words, O Grecians! can express our sense
 Of this most generous act: I cannot thank ye,
 My heart feels all your goodness; but speech is wanting:
 How to reward you should be our first study.

Crito. We have our best reward in these your praises.

Even. No not from ours alone. Both heaven and earth
 Must join in approbation of your conduct.

Cen. For this your names shall ever stand recorded
 In Grecian annals. Future times will honour them.

CHORUS.

Yes, may the deed on all Athenian breasts
 Be deep imprinted; nor the time forgotten.

Critobulus shall see it duly register'd :
 But note it now, Evenus, and mark down
The month Boedromion, and in the first year
O' th' ninety-fifth Olympiad. Be it memorable.

Even. O ever memorable ! and henceforth this day
 A white one shall be held. On it let all rejoice.

Chel. The most distinguish'd sure on Athens' roll.
 Glorious ! to see her ablest men step forward,
 When virtue and true religion stand impeached.

CHORUS. .

To sage Minerva, tutelary goddess
 Of this proud city, Athens—she emblem only
 Of the true Deity's wisdom, though by the multitude
 Worshipp'd idolatrously—yea, to sage Minerva,
 Soon in the Parthenon shall our thanks be given,
 All rites perform'd and due oblations made :—
 Since such is the usage of our country—
 For that her heavenly inspiration fill'd
 The bosoms of the Thesmothetæ, and moved them
 To this so lenient judgment ; but to amerce
 Our great philosopher as for a fault committed,
 No crime acknowledging—For this had cognizable been
 By Arcopagus' court.

Cen. The fine, too, perhaps imposed
 To please the people merely :—themselves embracing
 Secretly his opinions, though they dare not avow them.

Crito. But it must be our care forthwith to pay
 The sum in which philosophy stands mulcted,
 And free her from these ignominious shackles.

Soc. With much attention your discourse I have listed :
 And for the service with such zeal perform'd,
 Accept, O countrymen ! my thanks. Now hear me !
 To trust to Grecia's laws had been much better
 Than thus to have sued for a remission of them.
 In *that* lies honour, and in *this* disgrace.

Your answer is, 'twas done with my concurrence.
 True : or at least I faintly did oppose it,
 For poor Humanity sometimes had her terrors.
 But now my heart shrinks not at fancied dangers.
 What should I dread, wrapt up in conscious innocence?
 But of the particular judgment in my case given,
 'Tis meet that I should speak : and thus I think of it.
 To pay this penalty were to buy my pardon :
 A pardon purchas'd for no crime committed.
 But even to grant this fine on guilt were laid,—
 Say, is it thus that Attica would punish it ?
 Thus in a paltry sum condemn impiety !
 No ! should the charge be founded, the penalty is death.
 Now think on the judgment given by the Thesmothetæ.
 By that it appears the accusation brought
 Against me was deem'd false.—Or if I criminal am,
 Why are the laws administer'd thus feebly ?
 Would Athens' magistrates compound for crimes ?
 Where is the boasted justice of our country,
 If those who should direct it act by favour ?
 I will not pay this fine : nor thus be held
 Guilty, but still unpunish'd—Athens' scorn !
 I must be either culpable, or not so ;
 An obloquy on me is thrown ; and, therefore,
 A full acquittal, or condemnation, I seek.

Chel. Friends, he has lost his reason—as I shall mine,
 Unless you force him hence.

Cen. He loves renown,
 Whose charms too oft are fatal. Fain would I bear him
 Far from the influence of the beauteous syren,
 Who lures him on to ruin : to dark destruction.

Even. Beauteous ! her features thus distorted, seem
 To me most ugly : and I stand immovable,
 Like those who gaze on fell Medusa's tresses,
 Her snaky ringlets, and her face of horror ;
 (More hideous seeming, for that she once was lovely,)
 In truth, a very monster that appears,
 Which late show'd comely, beauteous, all enchanting.

A DRAMA.

CHORUS.

But who are these with so much state approaching?

Adimantus. Health be with all: and to the prisoner
comfort!

By the Thesmothetæ sent—(the true descendants
Of Apollo Patrius, and Jupiter Herceus we,
And thence this honour) accept our greetings, Socrates.
A double authority are we invested withal:
First, to demand the sum thou stand'st adjudged in,
So shall thy enlargement the more speedily follow;
And in a proposition made by Melitus,
Knowing the poverty of thyself and followers,
To pay the forfeit, on the sole condition
That he should wed thy daughter, far-sought Chelonis,
Not more for beauty than for worth distinguish'd:
Thus would he break thy chains; and knit the bands
Of sacred friendship with more sacred love.

Soc. Matchless effrontery! Chelonis wed Melitus?
Much sooner in the temple rais'd to Bacchus,
Surnam'd Omestes, on that horrid altar
For human sacrifice reserved, would I offer her.
Yes, rather should she there a victim fall,
Led by my palsied hand, and by it slain.

Chel. And I to save myself from such debasement,
(My father failing in his virtuous purpose)—
Such vile debasement! would all other evils
Fly to with transport, with unbounded rapture.

Soc. And this, though Melitus in wealth and power
Stands high distinguish'd through the states of Greece.
I boast a daughter worthy of my name!
Go, tell him this, and tell him misery's joys,—
Aye; *miser's joys*:—Ask if he comprehend ye;
And further ask, how he dare call me poor,
Whose riches equal Croesus' and his own.

Adi. This contumacy will much injure thee, Socrates:
I fear thou wilt not soon regain thy freedom.

Soc. Freedom of mind even now I fully enjoy:

No one can fetter that. As to my sentence——
 These magistrates are venal, or are ignorant :
 Most have declar'd me guilty ; yet for my crime
 Extenuation they proffer—mocking our edicts.
 From their corrupt, or their erroneous judgment,
 I make appeal. To Mars's hill I carry it.

Crit. Against thyself powerfully hast thou argued :
 But this contempt of life befits not Socrates,
 Befits not virtue. Life was bestow'd on man
 For constant exercise ; and with it faculties
 Still to direct him in his higher pursuits.
 Then tell me, great philosopher as thou art,
 Should gifts like thine be thrown away disdainful ?

Soc. That we should here await the sacred pleasure
 Of Him who sent us, all good men will acknowledge.
 But with what view or end this breath was given us,
 Is not for finite beings to comprehend :
 Though to condemn the boon were surely to displease
 The all-beneficent, all-potent Donor.
 Now that we here are placed for some great purpose
 Cannot be question'd, though we know not wherefore :
 Perhaps, at death, it will to us be full reveal'd :
 This only we know, that vainly the Almighty works not.
 But it would ill beseem us to make inquiries
 Touching his dispensations, or particular powers,
 His motives for such conduct or his high behests.
 These, if we knew, we still might deem mysterious,
 Or farther be tempted to arraign the ways
 Of Providence, and its dire vengeance awaken.
 Best not attempt such matters to investigate ;
 Suffice it, that inform'd of our duties we duly practise
 them.

* * * * *

Critias! thou mak'st not just and clear distinctions ;
 Death may be lov'd, without despising life.
 Of it we ever should make proper estimate :
 Nor simple existence rate 'bove truth and virtue,
 I could be still content to live, although

The soul pines in its bondage; but then my course
Must be with fair fame pass'd. The sum is this,
That I prize life, but far beyond it honour.

Crit. Much thy placidity of soul astonishes me.

Soc. In the calm doctrines of Anaxagoras' school
Thou art but little read: when perfect in them,
To our frail being thou perchance wilt attach
A fit consideration; and as thou view'st
Its self-conceit and vanity, learn to admire,
The ataraxy of our sect, and cherish it.

Crit. This, as it affects our pride, I feel already;
But when oppression comes with giant stride,
An honest indignation fires my breast,
And, as I think, resistance well becomes us.

Soc. No more of these poor fears:—have trust in
Heaven.

Apoll. Yet once more, let us pray thou wilt abide
The Archons' sentence. Straightway will we raise
The sum required, and take thee to our bosoms:
Thy friends, thy daughter, all with tears implore it.

Soc. Peace, peace, nor ever wish me to live with
infamy.
Beside, that judgment I appeal'd from. Those gone
hence,
Will so report of me. 'Tis certain, therefore,
By Areopagus soon I shall be summon'd.
Such is my wish: for as I stand accus'd
Of a false worship, that court alone should hear me;
'Tis its peculiar province. My great offence
Is, that the Deity I so fervently adore,
Has not been named and admitted in full senate.
To entertain new gods is not a crime;
'Tis only so, not having the judges' suffrage;
For you should well consider, that at Athens,
As also at Delphi, the *Theoxenia*,
Or feast of the strange gods, is duly celebrated.
There is, I say, no crime in such a worship:
It merely wants the Areopagites' sanction.

I trust to gain that sanction, and avert
The punishment which else too surely waits me.

Apoll. But that not gain'd—(and the event is doubtful)
Thou own'st thy adorations will be held,
By them, most impious, and with death be punish'd:
From such great hazard we would gladly keep thee.

Soc. Remember for whom, and in what cause I stand.
To our new faith,—strongly the hope lives in me,
I yet may converts make—the thought is comfort!

Crito. Farther, the charge by Anitus brought against
thee,

Is not in worshipping new deities only
Without such privilege given: but in a ridicule
Of those already enroll'd—above all, Ceres.
The Eleusinian mysteries thou hast mock'd,
As he avers: greatly we fear his influence.

Apoll. Were this the case, the Eumolpidæ had ap-
pear'd in it:

They would not silent remain those rites profan'd.
His black intent, I trust, will soon be manifest.

Crit. Our hope must rest on this, that he alone
Of the sacred ministers stands forth to prosecute:
The Hierophantæ of our numerous temples,
Not even reproof find for Socrates' conduct.

Apoll. To Athens' grand tribunal we must lead him.

Chel. Ah, my foreboding heart! much ill awaits us.

First Del. Let us not thus anticipate misfortune.
In this strong furnace our lov'd master's qualities
Will be fully assay'd: and thence I trust he'll issue
Brighter, if possible, than he was wont to appear to us.

Second Del. And of it, might his zeal more temperate be;
I well should augur, from the late procedure
Of that high court—though not supreme—which ques-
tion'd him.

CHORUS.

Much we respect, yet dread, that rigid power,
To which so pertinaciously he appeals.

Even. That power may enforce the laws, but will not
wrest them

To cruel purposes, though urged by Melitus;
(Unworthy member he of such a senate!)

Most, we are told, are men of tried integrity,
Men who in doubtful case would surely lean
To mercy's side:—Be of good courage, lady.

Chel. Were men alike unfeeling, what a world!
Were Vice hereditary, where should Virtue,
Poor trembling Virtue, hide her abject head?
From such a numerous, such a powerful host,
O how should she escape from Persecution's whip?
That whip of steel, O how should she defend her?—
No: the kind gods will yet have care of goodness.
Somewhat collected now, I'll bear awhile
My griefs without complaining. Heaven's will be done!

CHORUS.

Virtue! from thy pearly seat,
In the empyreal sky,
Thee, guardian of the good, we greet,—
Hither turn thy radiant eye,
On woe-worn Chelonis, poor trembling maid,
And lend, oh, lend her, thine all-potent sovran aid.

Melitus' friendship should she prove,
Regardful of her hapless state,
O save her from his dreaded love,
Far more dreaded than his hate.
So shall the glorious powers that rule on high,
Hail thee in liquid notes of sweetest minstrelsy.

Even. Another deputation from the magistrates—
The ensigns of their office borne before them,
Speaks it of moment. In good time they are here.

Apoll. From the higher forfeiture they yet hope to
save thee.

Crit. And with them comes the Spartan general,
 Ramphius;

In war to us well known, though not in peace.

Ramph. By Lacedæmon's king, the mighty Agis,
 I am sent ambassador to the Athenian state.

The Archons have received me with such honours,
 As mark their high regard for Sparta's friendship:

Yet, as the business on which I come,

And the demand I make, cannot be answer'd

By them, however willing, the object of it

Not being within their power,—they refer me hither.

Soc. To me, to wretched Socrates, refer thee!

What should this business be? declare it briefly.

Ramph. Thus stands the matter. It is Sparta's wish,
 To live in peace with all; but chiefly Athens.

But Athens lately in her bosom warm'd

A serpent, doubly fang'd, in act to wound her,

Even to the death:—that serpent, Alcibiades!

His country seeing the arts by which he work'd,

Endangering her own safety, to the shell

Have they consign'd him. Yet 'tis thought he lurks,

Though by the ostracism exil'd, here,

Striving, by his agents, to create new factions,

The city disturbing; and all to war inducive.

Him, with some others after to be nam'd,

The king I represent, requires as hostages

For Attica's true faith:—but more to defeat

The machinations of that restless man.—

He in return, will a like number of Spartans

Send as pledges for himself and the Ephori.

Soc. In what has this to me a reference, Ramphius?

Ramph. As being of this base citizen the friend.

Soc. Baseness had never yet a friend in Socrates.

At once thou slanderest both him and me.

Hast thou yet more?—I wish this conference ended.

Ramph. Where Alcibiades lies hid is known,

Most probably to thee—resign him to us!

The Archons, willing to maintain the league,

The pact concluded with the neighbouring nations,
Entreat thee to it ;—will remit thy fine,
And further reward thee with one hundred minæ.

Soc. I marvel they should practise thus on me ;
The Archons know I better prize mine honour.

Ramph. Thine honour suffers most a coward protecting.

Soc. A coward !—True, I had forgot the day,
When Alcibiades at Mantinæa met thee :
When o'er the crimson plain, with elk-like speed,
Thou fled'st,—and wisely. Hadst thou been too near him,
Perchance he had infected thee with cowardice,—
Thee, so renown'd, and of the Peplum worthy !

Ramph. From thee this scoffing !—Thus fetter'd and
disgraced.

CHORUS.

Disgrace is not for him who wears these chains ;
It is for those who place them thus unworthily.

Soc. My thoughts are known, no need of further
parley.

Ramph. Perhaps this damsel may less scrup'lous be.
Say, wilt thou serve thy country and thyself—
For Agis greatly powerful is, and princely—
Wilt thou point out this hateful man's retreat,
And hinder war's fell ravage ?—Thou surely know'st it.
What is thine answer ?

Chel. I am Socrates' daughter.

Ramph. Laconia, Attica, have ask'd him of thee ;
An enemy he to both : to both a traitor !

Soc. Thou wrong'st him grossly. His retreat we know
not ;

But this we know full well,—he loves his country !
Full oft has bled for her—unnatural parent !—
And will again when, in distress, on him she calls.

Ramph. His place of concealment must be known by
many :

Yet, still in tracing him we have been baffled.

'Tis strange,—since proclamation too was made,
With large reward for any who might bring him in.

Soc. And does not this proclaim his virtue, Spartan?
His comrades' virtue? Vain is thy pursuit.
This news is cheering—for the nation soon
Will see its error, and restore him to us.
Athens! I will not call thee now unnatural.

Ramph. Agis, incens'd against a people harbouring
This traitor foe, whom they so late condemn'd—
O people, changeful as the changeful wind!—
Will pour his armies on ye, all resistless,
With whelming force! soon will ye feel his vengeance:
Soon will ye find he is indeed a king!

Crito. Thinks he that kings
Were form'd for nought but tyranny and slaughter?
O! he mistakes their functions altogether:
Agis is king, yet knows not half his power.
I, bred in schools, could yet inform him of it:
Nay, teach him his whole duty.

Ramph. Duty? absurd! what slaves——

Crito. O fatal error!—*all were made for one*,
Such is thy fond opinion; but know, weak man,
That doctrine ever must be held most base,
By all who can judge rightly. What is he,
Who thus presumes to rule the world at will?
Is he of other nature than those beings
Who swarm around him, doing lowliest reverence?
Say, has he never known what 'tis to hope,
Yet have that hope, as by a mildew, blasted?
Ne'er felt the pains of sickness, nor e'er drank
Of Misery's cup, that thus he dares to sport
With poor Humanity—to sport, as though
He were in all unconscious of the ill
He heaps on these his fellows? His fellows, Spartan!
Start not, for he is of the self-same mould
As those whom he contemns. I know that some,
In basest flattery, a god have styled him.
This god, O melancholy truth! must die:

Will shortly be as nothing—all forgotten !
 Even like the poor and despicable worm,
 Which, heedlessly, we tread on.

Ramp. Think'st thou by this,
 To serve thyself, thy colleagues, or thy country ?

Crito. I think that Truth, bright goddess ! may im-
 press

Even on his iron breast, her stamp indelible ;
 Therefore, I speak her dictates—bear thou them to him.
 A demi-god he should be, but he is
 A very Cacodæmon. Thou talk'st of sov'reign rule !
 I grant that in the hands of kings are plac'd
 The rod and sceptre of authority:—
 But know, *Authority is legal power*,
 Not wild licentious sway. Monarchs can give,
 O blest prerogative ! that life, the law,
 From fatal precedent, pronounces forfeit,
 Though trifling be the offence :—'tis theirs too, so to deal
 Justice to all, that they who meet its sword,
 Shall own the common good required the blow.
 Kings should their countenance freely lend to those
 Who claim distinction, or in arts or arms ;
 Give aid to wretched indigence, nor wrest
 From honest industry his scanty product,
 To feed and pamper wanton luxury.
 Thus should kings be : these are their few prime
 blessings—

The few prime beauties that adorn their state ;
 For in the radiant circlets of their heads,
 Thorns are full thickly set.

Ramp: Well, I have heard you ;
 Heard you with patience,—but you are a Philosopher !
 You have some frothy and high-sounding words,
 Such as in Academus, or the Porch,
 Perchance might gain applause. But say, should Agts,
 Sprung from a race of heroes far renown'd,
 Become a suppliant monarch, asking his people,
 What laws they would be rul'd by ? that were excellent !

No, they who do his will shall have his favour :
 Not doing it, his wrath must quickly fall
 On their devoted heads. This is what kings,
 True monarchs should be—great, imperial, godlike !

Crito. Godlike !—O profanation ! impious man !
 The gods are chiefly known by their great justice,
 And love of human kind. Agis is lost
 To every sense of good. And now I see
 'Twere waste of words to urge, or thee, or him to virtue.

Ramph. Aye, prating sophister ! e'en keep thy words
 For other kings : mine would not thus be tutor'd.

Soc. Thou hast our answer, Ramphius, straightway
 bear it

To Lacedæmon's king, the mighty Agis.

Apoll. He is gone ; and on his brow sits stern defiance.

All Peloponnesus will be quickly call'd on—

All be invited to make head against us.

Even. Yet would it ill become us to despond :
 The fort Munychiæ owns no foreign master ;
 Though Epimenides so predicted of it ;
 By nature strong it is, and fully garrison'd
 With chosen men, whom Sparta taught to conquer.
 That key to Athens is securely ours.

Crit. The die is cast for war. Once more, Athenians,
 Your valour must be tried.—Great Jove, assist them !
 And thou, O God of battles ! hear my prayer—
 And still inspire them. Let not fear, nor sloth,
 E'er touch their manly bosoms. Aided by thee,
 The weak and drooping shall acquire new strength,
 Achillean strength !—and rival Ilion's sons,
 Thessalia's warriors, and the men of Ind.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

Goddess ! with undaunted air,
 That lov'st through perilous wilds to rove :
 That e'en amid the lightning's glare,
 On war's red plain, canst calmly move,—

Fortitude! that still art seen,
 In every ill, with brow serene,
 With look that speaks thy heavenly birth—
 Thee we invoke! on thee we call,
 For aid in this dread interval
 Of war and death!—our friends inspire,
 And touch them with the ethereal fire,
 That warms thy bosom.—

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

See her come!

The goddess—hark!—the firm-set earth
 Rings at her tread.—Now let each spirit assume
 Its wonted powers: and, justice for its guide,
 Brave, when a nation calls, the battle's rough and boisterous tide.

CHORUS.

Attica's banners are unroll'd,
 The brazen trumpet sounds alarms:
 'Tis liberty, rever'd of old,
 That calls our youthful bands to arms.

All love of conquest we disclaim,
 In self-defence is drawn the sword:
 Dreadful again to see war's flame,
 To lose the peace so late restor'd—
 A peace—mark Spartan faith!—by Sparta's self implor'd.

Crito. A public officer hitherwards bends his course,
 Doubtless to bear thee to our high court for trial.

Soc. He comes as my good genius:—I am ready.

Offic. This writing will inform you whence I come,
 And what my business—

Soc. Herald, lead on.

On Delium's plain I fought. This day my courage
 Will better appear.—I am already victor!

Yet wherefore talk of courage, when I wear
The panoply of Heaven—fully defending me.

Crito. Go, bright example to a treacherous world !
Thou mirror by the which mankind may learn
To dress themselves in Glory's splendid vest,
Or Truth's pure snow-white robe: go, and be ever
happy.

Apoll. True bliss is his:—scarce doubting, as he says,
To make new converts. Be the words prophetic !

Crit. Can his accusers boldly meet that visage,
Where sit benignity and heavenly grace,
His eye full-beaming mercy? No, it will rather,
Like to the power of magic, work upon them;
Fetter their tongues, or quite lock up their sense,
So that they stand fit objects to deter
All from such baseness—from such vile misdeeds.

Cen. O friends!—and is he gone? we yet might
rescue him.

Apoll. That were to incur the law's severest penalty.
It must not be:—we have attempted all
That men in such a case could well adventure.
These Delians, with a spirit truly noble,
Have offer'd him safe conduct to Laconia;
This he rejected—thinking flight disgraceful.
Others by their pleadings in our lower court,
Have led the magistrates to dismiss his cause:
With this not satisfied—an obloquy attaching,
As he conceives, from the censure there pass'd on him,
To Areopagus boldly he removes it.

Del. Much too refin'd his notions are: they bring
To us, though not to him, no little misery.
We have nothing now to offer but good wishes.

Apoll. O might our wish become a leading star to us,
Well could we shape our course on life's great sea:
But though those wishes sometimes are as friends,
Yet do they far more frequent come as traitors.
What we would have, we think may soon be done:
We wish for happiness, and straight expect it.—

Presumptuous man! and know'st thou where it lies?
 No, thou art in mazes lost even while pursuing it:—
 To such dilemma our half-reasoning brings us.
 Here rest we then, and trust all with the Omniscient.

Cen. In such a cause the interposing aid
 Of Heaven may well be ask'd—'twill sure be granted.

Apoll. Most sure, Cenagoras.
 Heaven ne'er permits injustice long to triumph,
 And yet we murmur at its dispensations:
 But 'tis our nature's frailty—ever querulous.

Crit. Thus murmuring were our people during peace;
 'Twill soon be seen if war will more content them.

Apoll. This war must be debated in full assembly.—
 And now the Prytanes prepare to hold it:
 I hear the cry of victims, for lustration slain,
 Join'd with the expiatory song and music.
 The sounds thus reaching us, the place appointed
 For consultation must be in the Pnyx;
 Even where our master has so oft harangued,
 So oft mark'd out to Athens her true glory.
 O couldst thou, Socrates, but now be present!
 Yet since the Fates thus cruelly forbid it,
 I would that Crito at the Suggestum presided:—
 Then might we hope adjustment of this quarrel.

Cen. This, haply, may by the Proedri be effected.—
 Much influence have they in the public councils;
 And ever to peace inclin'd, will urge it strenuously,
 If found compatible with the nation's honour.

Crito. Lacedæmonia's threats ye need not fear:
 Greatly enfeebled is she by the contests
 So long maintained with Argos and ourselves.
 'Tis certain too, that the Barbarians, lately,
 Have sent to her demanding earth and water.
 This Persic warfare will ensure our quiet.

CHORUS.

If it be so, then Attica shall soon
 Regain her pristine health, her ancient vigour.

Apoll. It long has been a question,—whether in arms
 Or arts, our country stands the most distinguish'd.
 They hold a nearly equal rank: but arms,—
 And much I sorrow 'tis so,—have the ascendant.
 Should this fond love of glory stronger grow,—
 I use the term as the world's prejudice fixes it—
 Soon shall we find the arts neglected all,
 And our true perfect glory forthwith vanish.
 This to prevent, my voice must be for peace:
 The love of human kind urging more powerfully to it.
Crito. War of ambition highly criminal is,—
 Defensive war alone can be deem'd just.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

May Peace, sweet Peace with laurels crown'd,
 On Acte's flowery plains be found.
 Meek-eyed dame that lov'st to dwell
 With lowliest swain in bowery dell:
 Quit, oh quit thy calm retreat,
 And in this country fix thy seat.

CHORUS.

Thee we invite with choral song,
 Timorous fair, O haste along;
 Come, O come and bring with thee,
 Truth and bright Humanity.

SEMI-CHORUS.

Should Justice once more visit earth,
 Then Truth would quit her sapphire throne,
 With us to dwell as at the birth
 Of Saturn's sons,—declar'd their own:—
 So should your worth—celestial pair! be known.

Then too, Humanity would love
 To make abode in this low vale:
 And oh, what transports must she prove,
 To find her long-lost power prevail,
 While her ear drinks the dulcet sound, "All hail!"

CHORUS.

Mortals! ye who wish to gain
 The path of honour, Truth maintain;
 If she your sure, unerring guide should be,
 Fearless you may approach the dim and vast Eternity.

Chel. What, no account yet brought from Mars's hill?
 Why do I not fly thither, and demand,
 Boldly demand my father of the senate.
 No, I must rather, prostrate at their feet,
 Implore, intreat them to restore him to me.

Crito. Nay, beauteous mourner, that indeed were
 madness.

Chel. Madness!—I thank thee, Crito, for the thought.
 I will be mad anon. Reason dethron'd,
 I shall be more at ease. Plagues upon them,—
 These tyrant murderers!—And yet I am not mad,
 For now I pray, *O shield my father, Heaven!*
 And now I weep, *Ah, poor ill-fated Chelonis!*
 Can madness pray? can raging madness weep?
 It cannot be!—the marks are storm and fury;—
 But I am still, and calm as unfann'd seas;
 The time that halcyons love to build their nests.

CHORUS.

What form is that? 'tis Madness self.—
 See! where the straw-crown'd monarch stalks;
 Hark! to the viewless wind he talks;
 Telling his sad tale o'er and o'er,
 In sounds that mock Aquilo's roar.
 Rage, direful rage awhile his bosom fills:
 Anon, with fix'd and ardent gaze,
 Far o'er some pathless wild he strays,—
 Silent as night—what time she flings
 Darkness from her jetty wings—
 There deeply ruminates his unmatch'd, numerous ills.

FIRST SEMI-CHORUS.

O tyrant of the human soul !
 On whom, dread ministers of unpitied Fate,
 The snake-girt furies ever wait :
 What earthly power can thee control ?

SECOND SEMI-CHORUS.

'Tis not for man that power to prove,
 The attribute belongs to Jove :
 Imperial Jove, who gives the nod
 To Phoebus, the far-shooting god,
 When he to human kind would grant relief,
 Abate the fever's rage, or soften deep and sharp-
 corroding grief.

Chel. How dreadful this suspense ! yet hear me
 Nemesis :

Hear, goddess ! hear, and to the senate give
 Such portion of thy justice, that their decision
 To him who now awaits it may—What see I ?

Apoll. Returning ; and still guarded—fetter'd too ?

Crito. Behold our friends, silent and slow ap-
 proaching.

Apoll. Their griefs too great for utterance. But from
 Chironomy,

An art approv'd by Socrates and Plato,—
 I find 'tis past :—to death our friend is sentenc'd :
 Soon must he drink the hemlock's pois'nous juice.

Chel. My father, O my father—Gracious Powers !

Soc. Daughter, receive my fond, my last embrace.
 Farewell ! retire—This scene—

Chel. Misery—misery—
 And is it—have they—— ?

Soc. Cease thy sorrowings, Chelonis.

Chel. At last I can obey thee. Take me, Heaven.

Apoll. She falls—

Crito. Struck by her father's fate, as by a dagger
 Driven through the heart,—she sinks to endless rest..

Apoll. All life indeed is gone. To the next chamber
Help me to bear her lovely form. Go some,
And to her female friends make known this grief:
But still from Socrates with care conceal it.

Crit. He thinks she swoons. We will not undeceive
him :

For though in death he never yet saw terror,
Still this event, occasioned by himself,
Would to his latter moments affliction bring.—
For nature is stronger than philosophy :
Her feelings suppress'd may be, but not extinguish'd.
Like pent-up fire,—when bursting into day,
They rage more fiercely,—greater is their fury. •

Crito. The love of offspring in all is deep implanted ;
This, even in brutes, the instinct we call *storgè*
Will prove abundantly. Great then would be the grief
Of our lov'd Socrates, this effect once known,
This dread effect of his inflexible humour :—
Fatal to himself and child, and to us painful !

Soc. See where the harbinger of death approaches ;
Or I should rather say of life, since he
The immortal beverage now brings. Slowly he comes,
The goblet trembling in his hand—the coward,
Haste ! bring the nectar, the life-giving draught.
How shallow is this cup ! O niggard magistrates,
So sparing of the precious liquor ?—None
To pour out in libation to your gods !—
I should indeed have thought that expiation,
By sacrificial rites, would at the hands
Of one so criminal be fully insisted on.
Think ye to appease your deities by my death ? •
By that alone ?—without the accustom'd offerings ?
I question much your faith from this remissness :
Since true religion asks, for crimes, atonement.

Apoll. Yet hold thee, officer : keep back, I charge thee.
He has insisted,—much against himself,—
That Athens' law should not in aught be swerv'd from :
• It shall not in a single point : then hear me.

The Theori, as the annual custom is,
 Are gone for Delos:—in the holy temple
 Of Apollo Phanæus to prefer their prayers,
 With sacrifices meet,—ordain'd by Theseus.
 Till from this sacred duty they return,
 The sentence pass'd on Socrates must not
 Into effect be carried. Such were unlawful.

Sat. They are return'd. The Thesean galley, yesterday,
 Was moor'd within our harbour. Would it were not!
 Would the whole band in great Apollo's fane
 Had ever remain'd; then should this godlike man
 Escape from punishment.—For well I know,
 That execution can on none be done,
 The Theori absent. That my report is true,
 The Epidemia, by their friends, now held,
 Will prove sufficiently.

Apoll. Such feelings do thee honour.
 But how afflictive is thy news! I thought
 These ardent worshippers of the oracular god,
 Would on his isle have made some stay, to inquire
 What is decreed of this new war:—and hop'd,
 By gaining time, we yet might work in favour
 Of suffering worth, and save it from destruction.

Sat. My orders are to see this draught administer'd
 To him, now prisoner here,—so that his death
 May quickly follow.—Slave! give the cup—

Soc. Doubt not the effect. Well shall the cup be drain'd,
 No dreg remaining.—Yet a little respite,—
 All fit ablutions I have already perform'd,
 And only need a vest to deck my body,
 As is the custom with all to death devoted.

Apoll. Behold it here!

Soc. Now, then, adorn the victim.

Crito. Triumphant virtue! wonder-working power!
 New glories thou deriv'st from this thy son.

Sat. These fetters, ere the deadly draught be taken,
 Must be struck off.—'Tis done that you may move
 Freely, and so the poison more active become.

Crito. Sorely these chains have gall'd thee, yet thou smil'st.

Soc. A pleasing bodily sensation accompanied The rubbing of the wound.—Therefore I smil'd. Pleasure and pain, indeed, are closely allied. Yet on their natures pondering, I conclude, That pain may *positive* be, but pleasure scarcely so ; Though 'tis by some maintain'd of these affections, That neither singular will e'er be found, But always conjoint : each on the other depending. I think not thus : yet freely will acknowledge, That not unfrequent they are found commix'd, The body's feelings may with the mind's be liken'd, Where joy and grief alternately prevail— Successive reign : nay, oftentimes dwell together In the same breast, with equal power divided. Thus, you perceive, that not to either sect, Stoic or Epicurean—both so vaunted In their respective schools—I much incline ; But rather would adopt the mean, preferring The doctrine of each sect, in part, as nature led to it. Bring me the drink. Nay, do not shudder ; thus— Health to the Senate, and to thee their minister !— What coldness ! Sure, Rhiphæan snows thou giv'st me.

Apoll. This man, so long accustom'd to the sight Of every misery, nay, to most grown callous, Here stands appall'd, his duty scarce performing.

Crito. What mean these varying, these tumultuous sounds ?

Soldier ! whence com'st thou, and with so much haste ?

Sol. The people clamorous are, and with one voice, Cry—" Show us Socrates, that injur'd man ! Quick bring us to him, we must be his guard."— Already are his prosecutors fallen Dire victims to their rage. The stronger party Have on the Acropolis seiz'd : disarm'd the garrison, And threaten Athens' magistrates with ruin, Unless they instantly reverse the sentence,

And give to their new idol life and liberty.
 Nay, some contend for his having constant maintenance
 In the Prytaneum :—Others, still more zealous,
 Insist, that on the Pinacia his name be inscribed,
 As well deserving a seat in the higher council.

Soc. Inconstant people : enemies to yourselves !
 So late my censurers—vindicators now !
 Haste, Crito, haste, and talk them into reason.
 Give them my thanks, but bid them respect the laws.
 Say, I acknowledge the justice of the senate,
 Wholly resign'd !—and tell them all I ask
 Is, as I peaceful liv'd, that peaceful I may die !
 And farther say, their zeal could naught avail,
 Were the poor pleasures of this world yet wish'd for
 By one fast journeying to the blissful regions.—
 Long have I liv'd in night, in utter darkness,
 But now it changes, and eternal day
 In full refulgent glory breaks upon me,
 The book of real knowledge to my eager view
 Unveiling—sure presage of the heavenly favour ;
 Go, tell them this, and tell them I am happy.—
 I mourn the fate of Anitus and Melitus,
 Poor hapless men ! by a rude rabble slain.
 Oh, had one pause been made ! one moment given ye,
 How had ye envied him so late despised :
 The man by your devices brought to death ;
 Yet in the bosom of his friends expiring
 Calmly, and soon to awake to lasting joys.

Crito. Somewhat appeas'd, the multitude are gone
 Straight to their several homes, yet loudly declaring,
 All posthumous honours shall be paid to him,
 Who in virtue and wisdom has all men excell'd.

Soc. This poison acts with potency. I feel
 Its influence in each vein. Where stands my couch ?
 Mine eyes are dim become. Cease weeping, friends,
 Or I shall think you have not truly lov'd me.
 But where is Chelonis ?

Apoll. Gone to that heaven thou pant'st for.

Soc. My proper daughter! Yet 'twas grief that
kill'd thee:

Grief at the rigid maxims I maintain'd,
Thus drawing down earthly vengeance on my head!—
Thy death creates a pang e'en while I pride in it:
One sigh, one tear—no more! Thy father soon,
At freedom set, shall greet thee with his love. . . .
My senses fast are failing, and my tongue
Can scarcely do its office.—Farewell all!

Crito. Farewell!—Soon to thy memory we will raise
A pyramid of Phrygian marble, graced
By fam'd Lysippus' sculpture, and thus inscrib'd—
“To SOCRATES PHILAGATHUS, this is consecrate.”
While zealous citizens,—if I rightly judge
From their late temper,—statues shall decree thee,
Perpetuating at once thy glory and their own shame!

THEODOSIUS TO CONSTANTIA.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Epistle is supposed to have been written by Theodosius, immediately after his having retired to the Convent, where he first learnt the falsity of the report concerning the marriage of Constantia. It was first published in 1774.

For the story of Theodosius and Constantia, see the Spectator, No. 164; likewise, the Letters between Theodosius and Constantia, published by the ingenious Dr. Langhorne.

THEODOSIUS TO CONSTANTIA.

SOON as mine ear had caught the voice of fame
That join'd Constantia with a rival's name;
Grief and despair alternate seiz'd my mind—
And can, I cried, Constantia be unkind!
O, had I words t'express how much I hate
The name of woman!—Though her praise were great;
Though she adher'd to virtue's strictest plan,
I still would think her base, and false to man.—
Ye native fields, that once were all my pride,
Where golden plenty smiled on every side,
Farewell—and O! ye ever blooming bow'rs,
Scenes of my love, amid my gayer hours,
To you farewell—I bid ye all adieu:
And if to faithless woman e'er I sue,
If e'er I strive another heart to gain,
May each revolving hour bring me increase of pain!
Thus did I rail at woman, ere I knew
Report was false, and thou, Constantia, true.
And though a father urg'd his stern decree,
Still, my Constantia, couldst thou think on me?
Still think on me, unmindful of control?
O, how the lov'd idea fills my soul!
Fool that I was to fly from charms like thine!
Wretch! to believe thou wert not wholly mine:
Thou, o'er whom honour evermore presides,
Whom truth directs, and every virtue guides:

Whose tender care can poignant ills assuage,
 Or bid the frantic bosom cease to rage :
 Whose mild benevolence the wretched know,
 Witness their tears of *joy* first caus'd by *woe*.

Come to my arms, thou ever charming fair,
 Come to my arms, and all my transport share !
 But shall I not thy anger rather prove,
 Than meet the kind return of ardent love ?
 Much, much I fear it !—yet if once you knew
 The mighty ills that Fame alone can do ;
 O ! if you knew how lovers catch the sound,
 And from her breath receive the killing wound ;
 Then wouldst thou pity rather than condemn,
 And mourn the suff'rings of misguided men.

Amid the woes that rend my tortur'd soul,
 One thought alone my passions can control—
 Constantia's mine ! her hand, her heart is free,
 Her blooming beauties are reserv'd for me !
 For me, who basely dar'd traduce her name,
 And what was virtue falsely laid to shame :
 Yet spite of all, my bold presumptuous heart
 Must ask forgiveness for its rebel part—
 A lover's suppliant pray'rs may sure be heard,
 Since but from passion's sudden gust he err'd.

Say, shall I hope ? O say ! canst thou forgive ?
 And ease my pain ; shall Theodosius live ?
 Live to be thine at last, supremely blest,
 And all his sorrows have eternal rest ?
 “ Look in my heart ”—methinks I hear you cry—
 “ He shall be mine ! ”—O bliss ! now let me die.
 Yet, 'yet, Constantia, there's a father's voice,
 Oh, would he deign to sanctify thy choice !—
 Deign to approve my vows !—then welcome joy ;
 Love, love alone should every hour employ :
 But vain the wish ! Yet grant this sad relief,
 Breathe sigh for sigh, and give me all thy grief.
 Lost to the world, and all I hold most dear,
 Remembrance asks the tributary tear ;

Painful remembrance ! here must I remain,
 And waste my years in penitence and pain.
 Nought now avails—my tears are fruitless all,
 Here am I fixed, here settled past recall !
 No longer Theodosius boasts a name,
 For he is dead to friendship, love, and fame ;
 The father Francis now demands thy pray'r,
 Then grant him that !—and more—if more you dare.

O gloomy horror ! how this low-browed cell
 Inspires despair !—and hark ! the midnight bell
 Strikes on my list'ning ear—the sound dies slow,
 And my breast labours with increase of woe :
 The taper, also, sheds a paler light—
 And the winds whistle through the stormy night !
 But well it suits the tempest of my soul,
 Where rage and terror reign without control.

Assist me, Heav'n ! before my wondering eyes
 Unnumber'd forms in various order rise !
 Is it Constantia, that celestial maid,
 Whom I behold in azure robes array'd ?
 It is !—it is ! in all her charms confest,
 Love in her eyes, and transport in her breast !
 Hold, hold, my heart !—th' illusive scene is o'er,
 And mis'ry points me to my destin'd shore.

How ill befits it with a state like mine,
 To sue to Heav'n, and yet at Heav'n repine :
 Such is my fate !—religion's vows are vain,
 When love all-powerful holds the glitt'ring chain.
 But what have I to do with love or thee ?
 Renounce, despise me, and henceforth be free,
 Free, free as air ;—I am not worth a sigh ;
 Forget I liv'd, and am content to die.
 Forget ? ah, no ! e'en now my bleeding heart
 In vain attempts its wishes to impart ;
 Now nature struggling in my hostile breast,
 Heaves like a troubled sea that cannot rest.

Haply, in time, once more thou mayst regain
 Thy sweet serenity, unmix'd with pain ;

Then, if some happier youth thy hand request,
 Refuse him not: and may ye both be blest!
 Such is my wish, and shall be while I live—
 Wishes and pray'rs are all I now can give.
 Yet should Anselmo—how I hate that name!—
 Presumptuous, urge his more than guilty flame,
 Straight from thy presence wouldst not spurn the boy?
 I know thou wouldst—the very thought is joy!

How oft, in vain, have I essay'd to free
 My love-sick soul! yet still it clings to thee;
 Still clings to thee by power and time unmov'd,
 Dear fatal proof how fondly I have lov'd!
 For thee I waste the midnight lamp in sighs,
 Or rend the vaulted roof with piercing cries:
 For thee my bosom burns, my eyes o'erflow,
 For thou art all my joy and all my woe—
 Reason in spite of every boast must fail,
 "Love is triumphant, and will still prevail."

Let stoics boast the more than human art,
 That bids cold apathy seal up the heart;
 My gentler breast, at sight of other's woe,
 Bids sighs to murmur, and the tears to flow;
 And, unlike theirs, with sympathy imprest,
 Mourns the sad fate of innocence distressed.
 O, my Constantia, what a scene is this,
 To souls like ours, so form'd to taste of bliss:
 For they, congenial, sure had rapture known,—
 But now, ah now! e'en hope itself is flown—
 Thought crowds on thought, while each alike brings pain,
 And mine the task, such misery to sustain!

Hard is my lot! for ever doom'd to stay
 Where cloistered walls exclude the jocund day;
 Where not a smile illumines the dreary scene,
 No bosom tranquil, and no brow serene!
 Far different this from what my fancy drew,
 When thy enchanting form first met my view,
 When with convulsive throes, thy bosom heav'd,
 And my rapt ear thy tender vows receiv'd;

When I, too, swore by all I held most dear—
 And, witness heav'n, my vows were then sincere—
 But ah, remembrance, let me not pursue
 The dreadful thought, lest madness should ensue.

At length resign'd, forgot each worldly care,
 Day after day is spent in fervent pray'r;
 In pray'r for those, who though their loves are crost,
 Will yet on pleasure's swelling sea be tost;
 Will yet expect some fav'ring gale to blow,
 And bring content—*which they must never know.*
 Far wiser those who seek in cells like these
 A life of virtue with a life of ease.
 Come then, my love, my sister, and my friend,
 Here seek repose, here all thy troubles end :
 Here Resignation lends her potent aid
 To soothe the sorrows of the love-lorn maid.
 Hail Resignation ! whose enlivening ray
 Can chase the clouds of gloomy care away ;
 Hail Resignation ! harbinger of joy,
 Though dangers threaten, and though ills annoy ;
 Thy gentle power by all must be confest,
 Thou giv'st them comfort, and thou giv'st them rest.

Yet if thy hand doth not its aid refuse,
 Write, write me all—thou canst not be diffuse !
 Pour out thy soul ! 'tis form'd by nature free,
 And then, unbounded, let it fly to me ;
 Describe each wish, each fond idea paint,
 For now, Constantia, there needs no restraint ;
 Nor need'st thou blush to own the latent flame,
 That warms thy bosom, when thou breath'st my name.
 No, give me all, transporting as thou art !
 And stamp thy image stronger on my heart.

If thy too cruel father ask my state,
 Describe it truly—all my griefs relate :
 Then should the tear of pity fill his eye,
 And nature force th' involuntary sigh,
 'Twill give me ease, say, almost joy, to know,
 He mourns the man whom he hath doom'd to woe.

O how severe the effort to subdue
A heart like mine which beats alone for you ;
To quell each tumult rising in my breast,
And calmly bid the passions sink to rest :
It will not be !—no, still thou triumph'st here,
Lov'd as thou art, and to my soul most dear !

END OF VOL. I.

